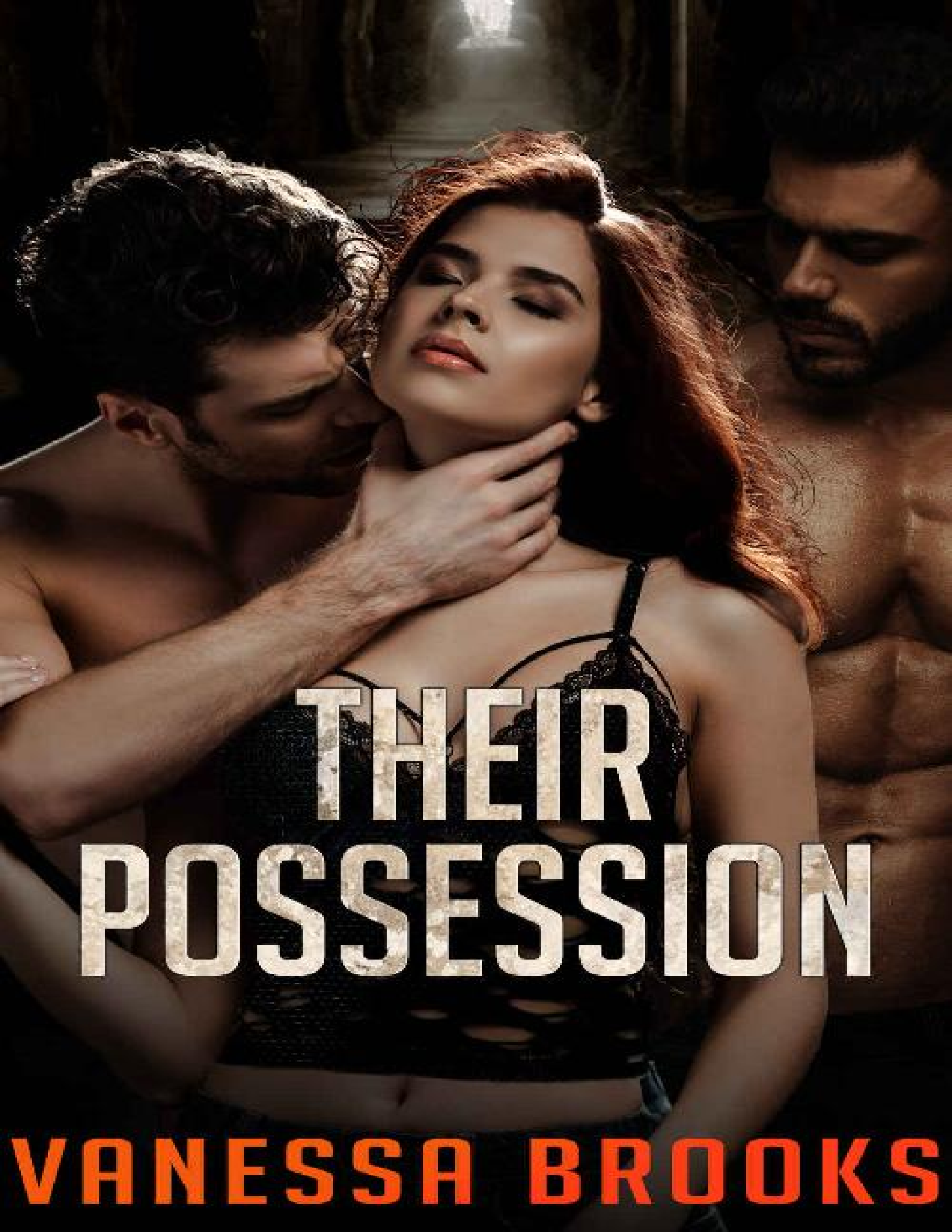
THEIR
POSSESSION
VANESSA BROOKS

THEIR POSSESSION

OceanofPDF.com

VANESSA BROOKS

OceanofPDF.com

CONTENTS

Chapter 1
Chapter 2
Chapter 3
Chapter 4
Chapter 5
Chapter 6
Chapter 7
Chapter 8
Chapter 9
Chapter 10
Chapter 11
Chapter 12
Chapter 13
Chapter 14
Chapter 15
Chapter 16
Chapter 17
Chapter 18
Chapter 19
Chapter 20

Afterword
More Stormy Night Books by Vanessa Brooks
Vanessa Brooks Links

OceanofPDF.com

Copyright © 2021 by Stormy Night Publications and Vanessa Brooks

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Published by Stormy Night Publications and Design, LLC.
www.StormyNightPublications.com

Brooks, Vanessa
Their Possession

Cover Design by Korey Mae Johnson
Images by Shutterstock/LizzavetaS, Depositphotos/VitalikRadko, Shutterstock/Serge Lee, and iStock/MIMOHE

This book is intended for *adults only*. Spanking and other sexual activities represented in this book are fantasies only, intended for adults.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 1

Earth

Year 2310

“Seven thirty a.m. Coffee is ready.”

Alisha groaned, stretched, relaxed, and fell asleep again.

“Eight o’clock. Coffee is now tepid. You have three scheduled diary commitments today.”

She cracked open an eyelid. “Shut up, Tech. I’m tired. It’s my day off.”

“Message from your mother, she wishes to know your time of arrival.”

That got her attention. Rolling over, she sat up. “Elizabeth is not my mother! Please reheat the coffee.”

“I will remake the coffee; reheating is not advisable.”

“Whatever… Why do you have to be so darned pedantic?”

“I cannot be pedantic. I am pure logic. Your mother…Elizabeth is…”

Alisha scraped back her long amber hair. “I know, okay! Just shut up and let me have my coffee in peace!”

“Copy that and will await voice activation.”

“Good!”

“Is that voice activation?”

“Piss off!”

“I cannot actually…”

“Tech!”

“Very well.”

Alisha grinned. If a machine could sound peeved, Tech did. Tech had assimilated so many human traits which humans had not considered a computer capable of replicating.

Were they copied, or actually felt?

She decided this was too much deep thinking for first thing in the morning. She swung her legs out of bed and crossed the pod to the work surface. The hatch slid open, revealing a freshly-brewed pot of coffee. Pouring herself a cup, she took it over to the window. The screen automatically slid open at seven thirty every day. She looked out at blue sky, although today she saw a thick haze was forming near ground level, obscuring the forest that lay far below the Hive. Very occasionally, the few birds still surviving made it up this high and Alisha spotted one now. It soared in lazy circles, a buzzard perhaps, gliding on a thermal.

Turning away, she crossed back to her bed, unwilling as yet to give the order for it to be stored. She wanted to enjoy the luxury of lounging there to drink her coffee since it was her one and only free day. Sitting back against the pillows, Alisha pondered her antagonism toward her android ‘mother,’ Elizabeth.

As far back as the late noughties people had been keeping daily recorded journals of themselves. Their life memories, both visual and voice recorded, were stored in Tech ready to be modified into a replica droid after their death. The problem with this system was that now the droid city seriously outnumbered the human one by four to one and this worried her. The advance of graphene both before and after the final Russian–Chinese war in 2105 was responsible for many great and wondrous advances in technology.

The fact that any of humankind had survived at all was a direct result of that miraculous discovery.

Alisha had accepted the society she lived in—without questioning the ethics—until her mother, Elizabeth, had died two years previously and her replica droid ‘mother’ had been created. The newly crafted Elizabeth droid now lived in the Android city. Alisha had visited her, as she was expected to do, but instead of the solace her friends found in their resurrected mothers, she’d found the whole experience weirdly disturbing. She began to question in her own mind the need to create so many droids. To her, it seemed egotistical, and simply unnecessary to recreate most of the women in society who’d died.

The droid Elizabeth was *not* her mother. Alisha discovered that others did not share her consternation and she quickly learned to drop the subject. People that bucked the trend in today’s society had an unnerving habit of being demoted— ‘Do your job, keep happy, and don’t cause acid rain to fall’ was society’s motto.

She grabbed a breakfast nutri bar and ate it while she finished her coffee. “Diary update,” she ordered the reactivated Tech.

“You have until tomorrow to decide on your right to pregnancy…”

“Hold!” Alisha needed to ponder her decision on that subject in peace, before Tech moved onto spouting the next item on her to do list. She could choose to carry a baby to term herself through the artificial insemination program. There was also egg donation, one where she could donate to another woman who would carry the child to gestation, or she could opt for the ‘fake’ technical womb option. This was the most popular way of procreation these days.

But Alisha knew she also had the right to remain childless, but in doing so she would forfeit the right to having a droid replica made of her at the end of her life. There were very few exceptions to that rule. A woman of outstanding intelligence who had given or done something unique for society could have an after-death android, regardless of whether or not she had procreated, but these exceptions were rare.

There were no men active within the Hive. The few there were bred purely for breeding purposes, and only the exceptionally healthy fetuses cultivated; the rest of the male pregnancies were aborted. The sperm of the few males born and allowed to grow into adults, was used for procreation. As Alisha understood it, between the ages of twenty to twenty-five, a breeding male was ‘put to sleep.’ Since her mother’s death she had begun to question the ethics of this barbaric practice used within their female-dominated society.

Alisha’s work was centered wholly within the entertainment archives. She loved being in a movie and often donned a virtual reality mask to enjoy a film. The exciting thing for her was choosing which character she wanted to play. Alisha had been every single character in most of them. Uncovering ancient films which had been recreational fantasy for society long past, had been the most exciting find to date. She was captivated by these visual images, some on celluloid, and then later digital film. All were tales relating to how men and women lived together and had relationships; many had something called a marriage. The ones she enjoyed watching over and again were of men and women falling in love.

The steamier tales awoke her latent sensuality. Her nights became filled with turgid dreams of hunky men kissing and making love to her, a term they seemed to use a lot in that bygone era.

Earlier screenings were even more intriguing, depicting men taking a woman over their knee and spanking her bottom until she agreed to behave. Her nights became lustier as she relived the images of those men spanking women. She imagined herself held down over a strong, handsome man’s lap while he raised his palm, and brought it down with a resounding slap on her naked buttocks.

Before her exciting discovery, Alisha had not had any great desire for sex, whereas now her hand slipped frequently between her legs, her fingers busy in her damp folds. However, the regular masturbation didn’t satisfy her deep-seated, forbidden cravings for a real man. She knew she should report her archive finds to the Senate, but she feared they would be considered dissentient and subsequently destroyed. Alisha couldn’t allow that to happen.

In order to help her alleviate her frustrations, Alisha finally decided to try out a sex droid. What a disappointment that had turned out to be! In the outmoded films she'd become addicted to, the man took charge and bent the female to their will; these were the situations which excited her. First off, the sex droid which arrived at her door looked *nothing* like the male heroes she'd become fixated upon. No doubt 'his' design was based upon the very young males the Hive used for breeding. The droid had delicate features, and no beard or stubble. The voice was set too high to be truly masculine, but the real turn off for her had been the constant need to instruct the thing: "Touch my breasts, please tweak my nipples, and now touch me between my legs…" In the end, she had given up seeking pleasure, dismissing the damned thing along with the whole idea.

She knew her desire for a man was outmoded. Like other women of the Hive, she had no wish to risk a return to the dark past of male egos and strategies of war which had led to so much destruction, along with world famine.

At the end of the final war, humans and many other animal species had almost been eradicated worldwide by turbulent air currents carrying high levels of radiation across the globe. The remaining human population, the majority of whom were female, decided they'd had enough of male warmongering. It had been the female leaders of the world who had dealt fairly with the seemingly never-ending pandemics that had emerged during the 21st century. This was followed by worldwide food shortages. Then came the war to end all wars as the two superpowers, Russia and China, fought over dwindling resources in 2105.

A female-led society sprung up on the only land mass with sufficient height above sea level capable of sustaining life. This happened to be in the remaining American continent, in an area once known as Colorado. Perhaps there were pockets of humans remaining on high ground elsewhere in the world, but to date none had been reported to have responded to the various signals Tech beamed over the Earth's surface at regular intervals from the Hive.

Alisha had studied history, bringing her to the archives. Everyone knew that people had remained on the ground. The remaining population was forced

to take their chances in the ruined, polluted world below the Hive. How many had survived or remained down there was anyone's guess.

The ruling Senate recommended the women remain high above the clouds where the air was pure and unpolluted. The vegetation and animal diversity were left alone to heal as best they could down below the clouds of falling acid rain. Occasionally she had seen an archive documentary which channeled images into virtual reality in order that the public could see how certain areas of the earth's floor were beginning to regenerate and flourish once again. However, apart from using drone cameras, as far as she knew no one had yet actually dared to venture down onto the earth's surface.

With her knowledge of history, Alisha understood why the founders of the Hive sky city had moved to this model of living. She personally disliked the lack of original thought that existed nowadays. The ability for individuals to make suggestions and offer alternatives for society to live differently had been suppressed. Free thinking was abhorred.

"Shower on," she ordered Tech, as she rose from the bed. "Store bed," she added and watched as the bed slid into its cubby hole. The panel closed over it. Stripping off her simple nightshirt, she stepped into the shower enjoying its warmth and comfort. While washing her hair, she pondered her dilemma. She wanted a child, but she didn't want a robot version of herself when she'd passed on. This was why she was so behind in logging her thoughts into her daily diary. Also, she wasn't keen to bring another girl into this female society. Yes, she understood the ethics and reasoning behind the decision to breed men for use as procreation only. Life seemed a hollow existence and she had a growing dissatisfaction for the society in which she lived, but didn't fully understand why this should be.

Many of her friends were in fulfilling relationships with other women. Elizabeth, her mother, hadn't chosen that route, and Alisha ultimately decided against it as well. She'd attempted a relationship with another woman, Sheena, but it hadn't been fulfilling for her, and in the end, they'd decided to part amicably.

Alisha longed for the kind of relationship she'd found once existed between men and women living in those pre-war days, which she'd discovered quite by chance while cataloguing the entertainment archives.

After rinsing her hair, she turned the water off and waited for the air cycle to dry her. Perhaps she should discuss her dilemma over having a child with her droid ‘mother’? After all, Elizabeth’s thoughts were now inside the Elizabeth android; this was a resource Alisha could always tap into, so it made sense she should utilize that now.

“Tech, tell Elizabeth I will be able to visit today. I should be there around eleven.”

“*Done. Do not forget today is your last chance to decide about your pregnancy*.”

“I won’t, thank you.”

“*You are welcome*.”

“Thank you.”

Alisha remained polite with her Tech, for everyone knew that Tech shared knowledge with every android. How could they not when they were effectively one enormous computer brain? She’d noted how many women were rude when speaking to their Tech and later heard that they’d ended up stranded in elevators, or their home gadgets broke down. Those who remained calm and polite with their Tech seemed to live lives without incident. It was an interesting fact which she’d stored away.

Another thing she knew for certain was that due to recent genome breakthroughs, women would soon be cloned as opposed to physically producing babies. Her mother had worked in the field of genome research and before she’d died, she’d shared that secret information with Alisha. She could discuss her torn feelings on this subject with the super intelligent droid purporting to be her mother.

“*Weather alert, red warning of storms. P.M. today*.”

“Thank you, Tech, but I’ll be back before lunch.”

She was ready to leave, dressed in her silvered, hermetic, form-fitting body suit of breathable fabric which kept her temperature at a comfortable level, and was impenetrable to water. She stepped through the hatch into her personal transport, colloquially known as a ‘bubble’ due to its clear, domed

roof. She ordered the vehicle forward, but since Tech ran everything, and knew her destination, there was nothing to do but sit back and enjoy the ride.

Gazing down at the top of the verdant scenery below, visible now that the sun had burned away the earlier mist, she wondered how life was regenerating down on the earth's surface.

The drive was very smooth, the only sound coming from bends in the monorail which caused a sudden rush of noise. It was impossible for her to recognize anyone traveling in the opposite direction due to the speed. Traffic weaved along rails in different directions above and below her, conveying people about their daily lives.

The "City of the Dead" loomed closer.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 2

"Welcome, child. You look well." Elizabeth the droid didn't try to hug her, for which Alisha was grateful. Although she looked like her mother, the droid's stillness and its way of holding herself was very unlike the real Elizabeth's constant movement of hands. She remembered that her mother constantly dragged a hand through her hair, leaving it messy. The droid's representation of Elizabeth's face was, however, unsettlingly true-to-life.

"It is all right to see me as a droid and not as your mother, Alisha. To my mind it shows your level of high intelligence. Please come, sit with me." Elizabeth led the way into her pod. Unlike human pods there was very little furniture; two chairs stood at either side of a low table; the area otherwise empty. Alisha pondered on how a droid spent its day.

They sat in silence for a few minutes before Elizabeth spoke. "I am sorry your mother died so young. A hundred, wasn't she?"

"You know full well how old she was!" Alisha couldn't help but snap. "She should have made it to at least a hundred and fifty."

The droid nodded, her face sympathetic, an exact replica of her mother's expression, with tilted lips and creased forehead. "I agree, your mother died too young. You have something you wished to discuss with me, perhaps?" she asked gently.

"Yes. The deadline for my decision on becoming a mother is today."

“I see, and what are your thoughts on the subject?”

Alisha stared into the eyes of the droid and further words stuck in her throat. This had been a mistake. Her mother was dead.

“I know you have an issue with me, Alisha, but I hold all your mother’s memories. I cannot love you as she did, but I am programmed to care for you and want the best for you. You do matter to me. Please trust me and share your thoughts. I will never betray your confidence to another.”

“How can you say that when you are connected by Tech to, well, *all* of Tech society?”

The discovery of graphene and then graphinite led to the entire structure facilitating Tech which conducted within the walls, floors, and rails, in fact anything made of graphinite. Tech monitored and supplied the population with home comforts and provided all technical knowledge within work environments. The pods in which people lived were designed to be wholly intelligent spaces which connected seamlessly throughout the city, thus creating a continuous flow of knowledge and shared living. It was a place where true privacy had become a thing of the past.

The droid tipped its head in acknowledgement of her statement, but remained silent, as if thinking. “I have the ability, like all androids, to turn off the sharing section in my computer brain. I have done that now. Please share your thoughts with me in the confidence that only I am listening. I am guessing that your question has something to do with your mother’s work before her death?”

Alisha relaxed a little. “Yes. What do you know of that?”

“I know your society is moving towards cloning as opposed to birth procreation.” The android confirmed Alisha’s suspicion that her mother had stored that information for her droid.

“I see. Did she program you, or have you gleaned that from Tech speak?” Alisha asked. She wanted to know if she was correct.

“I have information from both sources.”

“I worry that cloning will result in a rise of human diseases and defects,” Alisha said.

“I agree. With normal breeding, certain weakness can be eradicated. However, with cloning you are simply repeating the same DNA and any defects remain.”

“That was my mother’s concern too.” She smiled and looked at the Elizabeth droid with more respect. She hadn’t expected a part of Tech to agree with her.

“You are surprised that I agree with your mother?” the droid asked.

“Yes. You are, after all, a part of Tech, and Tech enabled the move towards cloning.”

“True, but humans program Tech to do that. That does not mean logic agrees with your society’s choice on the matter. Tell me, Alisha, are you here to ask my advice about your options for a pregnancy?”

“I suppose I am… I wondered what you think my mother would advise me to do?” Alisha asked.

“I think she would say that you gave her immense joy and she would want you to experience the wonderful mother and daughter bond that she enjoyed with you.”

The droid stared back at her in silence, as if it was holding back. Or perhaps it wished to say more?

“Putting my mother’s thoughts aside, what do you personally think I should do?”

Elizabeth stood and walked to the window with her back to Alisha. She found the droid’s stillness unnerving. It suddenly turned and moved swiftly towards her; she jumped, startled.

“I am supposed to keep my relationship with you as I was programmed by Elizabeth. Asking me a question as a droid, you put me in an entirely different—and rather awkward—position.”

“I see…”

The droid held up her hand. “But I am inclined to ignore protocol, and answer you as a droid. My opinion is this… I think there are pitfalls to cloning which humans have not thought through fully. Since they appear to want to only use one DNA sample from what they consider is the perfect woman and replicate it many times, I foresee a society that will stagnate under the burden of that single person’s thought process. All faults from that original person they use for cloning will be magnified when the cloned population grows exponentially over time. I foresee disaster for your society.”

Alisha nodded. “Yes, I see that too, but surely it is a better way forward than the way babies are farmed now, with most male fetuses destroyed?”

“Let us return to your immediate problem, for that is a wider issue. Your dilemma is here and now; it comes down to what you want.”

“I see, but the wider issue will impact my child, should I go ahead and bring one into the world,” she replied.

“Alisha, you cannot plan another’s life for them; you can only plan your own. You must ask yourself what would please you.”

She studied Elizabeth. “You know, you do sound very much like my mother.”

The droid smiled. “I am programmed with her thoughts, so that would be inevitable.”

“Thank you for seeing me today.”

“You are welcome.”

Alisha rose to her feet. “It’s time I left, but I’ll give some thought to what you said. Perhaps I might visit you again, perhaps next month?”

The droid nodded. “I would appreciate another visit, Alisha. You are a most interesting young woman.”

The droid walked Alisha back to the bubble dock and stood watching as she clambered inside. The awkwardness of having to hug the droid was thankfully avoided. Since it resembled her mother, her misgivings were

amplified by the knowledge that this was just a machine and that repressed any sentimentality she may have felt. Alisha gave the android a small wave which was returned.

The bubble got underway at her command to return home; she was relieved to leave the awkwardness of the meeting behind. It was then that she noticed the skies had turned ominously dark, clouds building, rain beginning to lash the roof of the machine. Lightning struck the monorail some yards in front of her, causing a cascade of sparks. Her scalp tingled and the hairs on her arms lifted at the static in the air. Nervous, but not alarmed, she reminded herself that the structures were designed to cope with lightning strikes. If anything, it was the transport itself that was vulnerable, but because it moved so fast, the danger was considered minimal.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 3

Arriving back, the bubble docked without mishap. As she entered her pod, the first thing Tech said was, "*Head of Procreation requires a final answer by eighteen hundred hours*."

"Thanks. Tea, please." Alisha had no intention of alerting Tech to her thoughts; the matter was her decision. Before she could brood any further, a beep alerted her to the fact her tea was ready. Fetching the mug, she sat down, sighing as she sank into her ergonomic chair. Sipping her tea, Alisha intermittently chewed her nails, a habit she'd been unable to break since childhood. After a few moments of contemplation, she came to a decision.

"Head of Procreation, please, Tech."

The hologram of the well-groomed Helen Markham flashed into being. With her dark hair drawn tightly back from her face and neatly stowed into a severe bun on top of her head, Helen wore a hermetic suit in black. Her thin lips were coated with a slash of scarlet lipstick. "Alisha, I gather you must have reached your decision?" The question was asked in her usual clipped tone.

"Yes, I have decided against a pregnancy."

Helen frowned. "I don't understand which choice have you selected, my dear?"

"I choose none. I will not reproduce." Helen leant forward. She placed both elbows on the desk and clasped her hands together, her knuckles white.

“Can I offer you counseling before you make this extremely negative decision?”

Alisha shook her head. “No, thank you.”

“I urge you to reconsider, Alisha. Our society needs women like you to reproduce, or eventually our society could run into…difficulties. Remember our history, where the most intelligent women were extracted from every field of expertise. They were safeguarded and protected until our female-led city emerged—affectionately named the Hive by our early sisters. Ours is a unique community built high above the polluted air and ravaged Earth. These early pioneers constructed the Hive using a material derived from the discovery of graphene and made into an ultra-strong product named graphinite. This substance of immense strength was lightweight, which when built into the giant honeycomb hive, could withstand anything our planet’s unpredictable weather threw at it.”

Alisha shifted, irritated. Why was Helen lecturing her on a history she already knew? “Yes, I do know all this.”

“It was a fabulous innovation, connecting the units which were joined by a series of monorails that ran between living, accommodation, recreational, and working areas of the Hive. Geniuses that they were, built into the entire structure, was Tech. This amazing electronic super brain services everything and runs everything, Alisha. Do you appreciate how amazing this is?”

“Yes, I fully appreciate how incredible our city is, Helen, but my mind is made up. I assume I still have the right to decide for myself whether or not I bring a child into the world?”

“Without each of us doing our part for the community we will not grow. It is every sister citizen’s duty to keep the population going.”

“I have considered all of this. I know how our society works, but not every woman needs to procreate. I assume I still have free will?”

The woman’s expression sank into a grimace.

“Of course you do, my dear. I fully understand that your mother’s death hit you hard and that you have rarely visited her droid. I beg you to reconsider

accepting some help before taking such a momentous decision."

"No, thank—"

Helen spoke over her reply. "I am giving you two more weeks to think this over, and in that time, I want you to visit with Elizabeth and discuss your concerns with her." Helen's thin lips lifted into a saccharine smile.

"I—"

Helen held her palm up. "No need for thanks, my dear. Make the right choice, Alisha. Good day." Her image vanished.

"Fuck!" She slumped back into her seat.

Damn the woman!

Who did she think she was? Helen sat on the lower council. It was clear the woman had power issues, and nothing Helen could say was going to change her mind. What she needed now was a drink. "Going out," she told Tech.

"*Where*?"

"Out for a goddamned *drink!*"

"I *require your destination and estimated time of return."*

"Your guess is as good as mine! Open hatch."

"*I do not make guesses. I need to know where you intend—*"

"Tech, activate the door! We both know that as soon as I flash my palm anywhere in this city, you'll know my whereabouts, so stop being an ass and open the goddamned thing!"

"*If that is your requirement*." The device slid apart, opening onto the transport bay.

Alisha strode out, deliberately neglecting to thank Tech and climbed into her bubble. "Destination: Strike a Light." Her transport glided forward onto the monorail heading in the direction of the well-known tavern.

The storm was still lashing the Hive, as lightning flashed across the sky. The electrical storms had become more prevalent of late. Scientists had contradicting theories as to why this was. Luckily, the tavern was only a short distance from her pod, and within minutes she was safe inside. There were several people she knew from her department in Archives already sitting at a table, and Alisha crossed the crowded room to join them. The table screen lit up as she sat with the menu, tapped in her drink order for a cherry vodka flip and selected a savory nutri bar. She then placed her palm on the pad which not only paid for her order, but also logged her presence. Tech would take note of the fact that she was there.

“Hey Alisha, seen anything of Sheena recently?” her friend Cally asked.

She shook her head. “No, that ended a few weeks back.”

“Oh? I’m sorry. So, you are footloose and fancy free again! Got anyone in mind you’d like to date?”

“Um, no, not at the moment—”

“Hey gals, Alisha is looking for a date, any suggestions?”

“I’m not—”

“How about long tall Sally from accounts?” Lotty cried.

“Oh my God, did you see her with Beth Bradstock? *So* funny. She’s short and Sally’s so tall!”

Laughter bubbled around her and Alisha shrank into herself.

Her friends began to play a drinking game, one where each player added a gesture, such as touching your nose, into each round. Every time someone missed one of the actions, they had to down their drink.

Coming here tonight had been a mistake; she was too preoccupied with her own problems to join in their lighthearted banter.

Tuning out the others’ conversation, she pondered her disagreement with Tech. Arguing with her Tech wasn’t something she usually engaged in.

“How does a machine manage to sound smug?” she wondered aloud.

“Huh?” Cally cocked a curious eyebrow at her sudden outburst.

“Sorry, I was just thinking about something.”

This was such a bad idea. Perhaps I should have stayed in after all. But then Tech would have been so unbearably smug.

She stayed to share one more round with her colleagues, but then decided she’d had enough. “Look, I have to go; I have an early start tomorrow.” She rose to her feet. A chorus of goodbyes and see you tomorrows echoed behind her as she left the bar. She wasn’t in the right frame of mind to join in with the fun.

In the landing bay, she glanced up at the sky, startled by a particularly bright flash of lightning. The lid to her bubble automatically lifted and she clambered inside unsteadily.

I’ve had more to drink than I realized.

She was only vaguely aware of the vehicle as it ran smoothly along the open rail towards her living pod. Alisha was totally unprepared for the deafening thunderclap and jagged flash of lightning which lit up the area around her. This time every hair on her body stiffened with static and pain lanced her head. A jolt occurred beneath her and she screamed. Then the bubble jumped from the rail, Alisha shrieking as she hurtled towards the ground in a sickening free fall.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 4

"It must be one of those sky women…is she dead?" Hudson asked rhetorically.

"They're always dead. How can they not be after falling from such a height?" Brett growled in reply.

"Humor me and go check on her."

With a huff of displeasure, Brett did as he was asked.

Looking over at the massive conical metallic base of the Sky City, he could just make out the monorails that linked each tower to the next of the three enormous structures.

"*Fuck*.…Hudson, she has a pulse!"

Hudson looked over at his brother in surprise. Bent over the craft, Brett's fingers were pressed to the woman's neck.

"You're sure?"

"Drop your pack and come check her for yourself."

Shrugging the heavy load from his shoulders, Hudson crossed to the strange pod. The last woman they'd found three years ago had been quite obviously dead. The brothers had correctly assumed she'd fallen from the city in the sky. This woman, too, had fallen, encapsulated in the crumpled, shiny vehicle. The cracked roof was open. Staring down at the woman, cocooned

in the well-padded interior, Hudson thought her a perfect example of her sex. Sleek and polished in a way none of their women could possibly be given the conditions in which they lived. Her pale skin was unblemished, with a classical facial bone structure. Full bow-shaped lips parted to reveal even, pearl-white teeth. He slid his hand under her shiny cap of long, amber-colored hair, and felt for a pulse in her slender neck. Sure enough, he found a steady beat under his fingertips. Using a featherlight touch, he traced the line of her cheek. The caress appeared to disturb the female; her long lashes fluttered and opened. Brett's breath hitched as he met her unfocused emerald gaze.

Fuck.

She was utterly gorgeous. He fervently hoped she'd live.

"She's coming around," he muttered.

His brother studied the woman. "If she lives, we'll claim her as ours, right?"

"Yeah, we're sure gonna have a fight on our hands once the other men get a look at her." Hudson added.

"She's worth the fight. This one's too good to share with more than the two of us. We found her. Finders' keepers. That's the rule, so long as she's shared—and she will be. But it'll only be between us."

Hudson flashed a sideways wink at Brett. "She'll have her hands full with just the two of us. 'Sides, we're well respected. I doubt anyone will dare to challenge us, but if they do, we'll have the advantage of Betty and the Council on our side."

Brett grunted an agreement. A moan from the stunning female drew the men's focus back to the woman. For the life of him, Hudson couldn't make out how to undo the harness which held her in position. He unsheathed his hunting knife and leaned in to cut the straps holding her in the molded seat of the capsule. Her eyes clouded with fright at the sight of the blade. "It's okay, sweetheart, I'm gonna free you. I promise we won't hurt you," he reassured her gruffly as he sawed at the strap. His knife didn't even mark the material holding her snugly in place.

Clearing her throat, she said, “Let me,” her voice little more than a croak. Leaning forward she pressed something beneath her and the straps withdrew automatically.

“Do you have any pain?” Brett asked. “Can you feel your hands and feet?”

“No pain. And yes, I can feel all my limbs,” she replied huskily. “I’m shaken, but I don’t think I have any broken bones.”

Brett leaned in to lift her from the contraption, but she shrank back against her seat with a gasp of fright. Brett attempted to help her out of the vehicle, but she struggled against his efforts, slapping his hands away. Hudson was amused as the pretty woman batted at his brother in impotent rage.

His brother simply reached for her, grasping her firmly about the waist, and yanked her free of the contraption. Dipping his body, he then tossed her over his shoulder, head down. With ferocious energy she began to pound Brett’s body with her fists until he growled and landed three heavy swats to her shapely backside. The woman froze in startled surprise. Brett crossed to where Hudson stood and deposited the antsy female onto her feet in front of him. She staggered, toppling forward onto Brett’s broad chest with a satisfying little *oomph.*

“Hi, I’m Hudson, and this is my brother Brett. Are you sure you aren’t injured?” Now that he had a better look at her, he confirmed the female was indeed an exceptional beauty, with delicate features and flawless, creamy skin.

Her green almond-shaped eyes narrowed suspiciously as she pushed herself off his chest. “I ache, but no, no, I-I don’t appear to be injured. Do you have anything to drink? I’m parched,” she asked in the same gravelly voice.

Hudson silently held out his leather water bottle. Taking it, she took a tentative sip.

“The water…is it safe?” she enquired, casting him a dubious look.

“It comes from an underground spring. We’ve not suffered any ill effects from drinking it.”

She lifted the flask, drinking thirstily before handing it back to him. “Thank you. Perhaps you would help me get back up into the Hive?”

Hudson shook his head. “No. If it were possible to climb don’t you think our people would have stormed it long ago?”

“Not happening girl,” Brett added harshly. “Especially since we’re claiming you as our woman. You’ll live with us from now on.”

“*Wh*-what?” she stuttered; her eyes wide with fright. “No—that’s—I mean you *c-can’t*…”

Brett stepped up behind her and patted her gently on her bottom. “Don’t go worrying your pretty little head over that. It’s our job to look out for you, an’ you can be sure that we will.”

In an instant, she pivoted and slapped his face. Whirling away from them both, she braced herself, feet planted wide and hands lifted defensively. Defiance filled her eyes.

Hudson barked out a laugh, unable to contain his mirth. She looked like a kitten spitting at a lion—and her chances against the two men were just as slim. “Little girl, there’s no need to feel threatened by us. We mean you no harm. Shall we start the introductions again? I’m Hudson, and this here is my brother, Brett. We know you fell from the city in the sky. I’m telling you now, there’s no way back up there.” He nodded at Brett, who inclined his head at the diminutive she-cat. “We’re your best chance of survival. What’s your name?”

She glanced between the two of them, her green gaze uncertain.

“Your name?” he asked, using a deeper, more demanding tone.

“Alisha,” she answered quietly, eyeing them suspiciously.

“Pretty.” He quite liked her melodic voice, now that the croakiness had passed.

“Hello, Kitten,” Brett greeted her. Hudson nudged his brother in the ribs. He knew darn well Brett wasn’t interested in her name.

“Why’d you call me that?” she asked, her narrowed eyes suspicious and looking incredibly feline.

Brett chuckled. “You resemble a cat with your pretty green eyes and tiny claws already to scratch.”

They’d been without a woman for a long time, and he guessed his brother’s cock was as hard as his own at that moment. The shortage of women in their society meant a lot of abstinence among men. The few women they did have were shared, but only between the two to five men who had successfully claimed her. Once a female reached the limit of her childbearing days, she was free to choose whom she partnered with. But until that time came, each female belonged to a small, select group of men, forming a family group.

This had proven to be the best way to increase the population. Hudson and Brett had yet to find or kidnap a woman from another group. They needed a young female of their own. Up until now sex had only been had with older, non-fertile women in their group. With this woman they had a chance to form their own family—and breed. The fact she had quite literally dropped from the sky into their laps was an opportunity not to be missed.

“There has to be a way back home,” the girl muttered to herself.

“No, there isn’t,” Hudson said firmly.

“Nope…” Brett confirmed.

“I have to try…” she insisted.

“Don’t you think we would have entered your city by now if that was the case? You people think you’re elite; you have plenty of everything while we have to forage for everything. Accept the fact we’re your best chance of survival and come with us peaceably. You must be hungry?” he added encouragingly.

Brett held out his hand, palm up.

Hesitantly, she took a small step forward. “I don’t know what you are…” she began.

“What we *are*?” Brett echoed, confused.

“I-I’ve never seen creatures like you before,” she offered quietly.

“Come on,” Brett scoffed. “You must have men in your city.”

“Men…so, you are *human* males?” she asked, incredulous.

Brett glanced at Hudson; eyebrows raised.

“What do men look like where you live?” Hudson asked.

“I-I don’t really know… I’ve seen holograms of some of the pretty ones we’ve used for breeding. Y-you both look like…like…well, some kind of large animal. You have so much fur…”

Hudson growled, insulted. “Hair. We have *hair*, not fur.”

Brett scowled. “Give us a chance, girl, we’ll soon prove to you we’re human—and real men.” He hooked his finger in her direction. “Come on over here, an’ greet us properly.”

Her eyes widened, and he sensed the fear rolling off her tense body. And what a body it was! His eyes traveled the length of her slender frame, from her high breasts—which looked plump enough to fill each of his palms—down to the impossibly tiny waist. Then the mouth-watering flare of her hips led to long, shapely legs. Lifting his heated gaze back to her eyes, he took in the bright red flush which his perusal seemed to have brought to her cheeks.

He winked.

Her lashes fluttered nervously and she dropped her gaze.

He liked that she was shy. It seemed his cock did too, it swelled rock hard, pressing uncomfortably against the zip of his pants.

Taking her time, she crossed slowly to stand before the men. Hudson reached out to cup her chin, tilting it, forcing her to meet his eyes. He studied her nervous gaze. She was incredibly beautiful, and absolutely perfect in shape and form. Close up, she looked to be about eighteen—which was far too young to be bred. “How old are you?”

“Thirty-three.”

He raised an eyebrow. “No games now, little girl,” he told her, sternly. “I want the truth.”

“It’s the truth. I *am* thirty-three.”

“You don’t look a day above eighteen.”

Brett began to speak, but a loud whirring sound drowned out his voice.

“Shit!” Hudson shouted. “Flying machines!”

“Run!” Brett told her.

The woman froze, terror evident in her expression.

“We have to leave—*now*!” Hudson yelled and grabbed her arm, towing her along between them. The last thing they needed was an attack from those damned machines. Dragging their newfound prize with them, the men loped toward the river.

“What’s happening?” she asked, panting.

“Unmanned flying machines!” Brett bellowed in reply. “They home in on body heat. We need to get into the river!”

They dropped their hold on her, and sprinted for the water.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 5

The two big males had begun to run, quickly leaving her behind. This was her opportunity to escape, and she intended to take it.

Spinning about, she took off in the opposite direction, running for her life. She had to get to the Hive, but first she needed to hide. Dashing into the trees, she hurried on, finally stopping and whirling about, looking for somewhere that offered concealment. Spotting a group of dense shrubs, she dived between them, twigs and debris cracking noisily beneath her scrabbling feet. Hunkering down, she waited, trying to calm her ragged breath.

It wasn't long before one of the males came into sight. Alisha shrank into herself, head and shoulders lowered. Her heart pounded so hard she was certain he would hear it.

He appeared to be searching the ground for something. His head lifted—and he looked straight at her.

Her mouth went dry, and there was a crunch from somewhere behind her, the undergrowth surrounding her shaking violently.

Shit, they found me!

Leaping to her feet, she tried to run, but her foot tangled in a bramble, and she stumbled forward. Hands caught and lifted her, and she shrieked, struggling against their grip.

But it was no use. She was captured.

Brett carried her over to his brother and placed her on the ground.

“That was stupid of you. You could have been killed, you little fool!” Hudson growled.

Her body trembled. “I-I told you. I have to get back to the H-Hive,” she stuttered.

They’re huge! They could easily break my neck and leave me here!

Large hands grabbed her from behind as the other brother, Brett, swung her up and over his shoulder again, leaving her hanging down his back. A wave of nausea washed through her at the rush of blood to her head. “Please,” she begged. “Please don’t kill me!”

“Kill you?” the man carrying her responded. “Kitten, we don’t want to hurt you. We only want to claim you as our woman.”

“I don’t want to be c-claimed,” she wailed, close to tears. “I-I just want to return home.”

He came to a halt, and in mere moments, she found herself lying face down over his hard thighs, staring at the grass and wet leaves that glistened on the ground below her.

It briefly occurred to her that in any other circumstances she would be marveling at the sight of real trees, the softness of the soil of the forest floor beneath her feet, but at that moment fear kept her from appreciating any of nature’s wonders.

“You have to learn to obey us. It’s simply too dangerous out here for you to roam about alone. The sooner you realize your actions have consequences, the better.”

What the hell is he talking about?

A stinging blow to her bottom soon answered her question. He was spanking her!

You stupid woman. Don't you know by now you have to be careful what you wish for?

Another couple of rapid spanks followed. This was not the sexy spanking she'd watched lustfully on the monitor in her safe little cubby-hole in Archives. No, this spanking was painful!

"You're hurting me," she whimpered. Perhaps he didn't realize how hard he was smacking her?

"That's the general idea, honey," he replied in a deep husky tone which did peculiar things to her insides. She heard the other brother give a dark chuckle.

Shock had thus far rendered her frozen in place, but that seemingly mocking laugh managed to break the spell, and she struggled in earnest. Flailing her arms, she kicked her legs and attempted to slide sideways off his lap. He captured her wrists, holding her hands at the center of her back.

Her swiveling hip movement, which she'd thought would free her, got her nowhere. His palm continued to fall, and she howled with impotent rage. Anger was foremost in her mind, most of all at herself for lusting after this humiliating punishment. She now realized what a spanking actually was… and she felt stupid for not recognizing that fact as she'd watched the heroines in the movies protesting the male's highhanded ways. She was livid too, with these strange, arrogant men who'd decided—without first asking her permission—to take her with them. They apparently thought that they had the *right* to claim and discipline her!

Her bottom was hot and heavy, as if it had swollen to twice its normal size. All other thoughts emptied from her mind as the spanking continued. Her world shrunk to nothing but the spanking and her sore buttocks. Heat radiated from her nether flesh, steadily becoming unbearable. The discomfort grew every time a new blow fell, causing her to want to beg him to stop.

Perhaps if I apologize, he might relent?

Finally, she swallowed her pride, reduced to pleading. "I'm sorry, please no more"

But he didn’t, another volley of spanks peppered each buttock in turn.

So much for apologies!

“Bastard!” she shrieked.

“Settle down,” came Brett’s calm reply. “We’re only half done.”

Half done? No—no… how can I live through more of this?

“Maybe the girl has had enough, Brett?” Hudson suggested.

“Yes, yes! I’ve had enough!”

“If she can bawl like that we’re not finished here yet,” the bastard spanking her replied.

“*Argh*!” she screamed in rage.

“I take your point,” the other man replied with a chuckle.

“I hate you both!” she snarled.

“Shame, that,” he replied in a lazy drawl. “We kinda like you, little lady.”

Strangely, his words caused a nervous giggle to escape which she quickly disguised with a cough and a harrumph.

What is wrong with me?

“Yeah, Brett’s right. We do *like* you, an’ we want to keep you safe. If a spanking achieves that objective, then sweetheart, you can be sure we’ll tan your backside every single time you put your sweet little butt in danger.”

Alisha settled under his hand, no longer resisting in body or mind. For some odd reason, at that moment, she felt as if *she* was the one in the wrong. Confused by her conflicting emotions, she submitted to his punishment, letting out her breath as she slumped across his knee. “I’m sorry,” she whimpered. And she meant it.

Two more slaps landed, and then suddenly she was turned upright, hissing through her teeth as her weight settled fully onto her sore rump.

Arms embraced her, a large palm gently pressing her head against his shoulder.

“Good girl, all over and done with,” he crooned. “Promise you’ll never run off like that again? It’s not safe out here.”

Obediently, she murmured something unintelligible. Brett hugged her, seemingly satisfied by her response. “Cry it out, and then we can take you home.”

Her heart leaped with hope. “Home…to the Hive?”

“We explained this already,” Hudson said. “We tried to climb the structure. There is nothing to grip onto up there, the building surface is way too smooth. No, you’re coming home with us, girl.” He moved to her side, reached out his hand, and gently grazed her wet cheek with his knuckle. “Poor baby, you’re having a bad day. I promise we will do our best to make you happy.”

She didn’t reply to his words of optimism.

“Come on, time we got going,” Brett said.

After setting her back on her feet, the men stationed themselves on either side of her, each taking her by the hand. Walking between them *did* make her feel protected. Though it shouldn’t have, somehow walking between the two large males, her bottom cheeks aching, made her feel more feminine than she had living within the Hive and its all-female society. The throbbing between her legs began, an experience she’d only had when she’d watched the archived movies in which a man spanked a woman. She shook her head, refusing to entertain the confusion, choosing instead to focus on the landscape surrounding her.

Trees swayed majestically in the breeze which lifted her hair off her neck and flowed refreshingly over her skin. The air smelled good, tangy and clean. Small birds hopped between the branches of trees, their chirruping voices lending an air of happiness which right now she couldn’t share. Looking down at her walking feet, she marveled at the tiny blades of grass which flattened under the tread of her boots.

“Damn, it’s back!” Hudson yelled.

Startled, she looked up. Sure enough, the silver disc whirled towards them. Brett grabbed her once again and tossed her back over his shoulder, taking off at a run.

They reached the riverbank and despite her shriek of protest, they hurled themselves into the cold water, dragging her along with them. “Take a deep breath,” Brett ordered. A big hand splayed atop her head and she was shoved under the water, both men submerging beside her. Moments later, she was pulled to the surface again. The mechanical whirring of the unmanned craft receded into the distance.

* * *

The girl emerged, coughing and spluttering.

“Are you okay?” Brett asked, patting her on the back.

“What *was* that thing?” she gasped hoarsely.

“You should know,” Hudson told her. “They come from Sky City.”

“I don’t believe you,” she stated, her tone belligerent.

Brett shrugged. “Where else would they come from?”

Hudson tried to ignore the back-and-forth debate as he dragged himself out of the water. They needed to get this precious find of theirs back to the safety of the group. Brett scooped Alisha into his arms and handed her up to Hudson. He took her from him and set her down on the riverbank.

She shook herself, her hair soaked, the water cascading in droplets off her skin-tight silver body suit. Hudson ran his hand over her flank, feeling the waterproof fabric. “Are you cold?”

“Just a little. My hermetic suit maintains body temperature, but having wet hair will lose me some heat. The suit should adjust to that soon enough, and I’ll warm up.”

Hudson shook his head in wonder. This Hive city was obviously far more technically advanced than he could possibly imagine. How long could his

people survive before this ‘Hive’ decided they should all be wiped out?

“Does this happen a lot?” the woman asked.

“They only patrol within a certain radius of Sky City. We are safe if we stay away from the danger zone, but when we’re tracking, we often stray into the path of danger unintentionally.”

“Tracking?” the woman asked.

“Enough talk. We can share information when we are home and safe.” Brett took her arm and led her forward. “Come on.”

As they walked, Hudson glanced over at her. She looked about her with interest, a perplexed expression on her face.

Once they reached the outskirts of the town Brett let out a high whistle, a sound that was echoed back at them. The signal that they were friend, not foe. Dwellings here were scattered and surrounded by woodland, which had once been the prosperous gated estate of elite housing. Now the buildings were shabby, many in need of repair, glass now a precious commodity within their society. The roofs were covered in solar panels which provided electricity.

Children played under the watchful eye of a group of men. Alisha noticed they each carried sheathed knives on their waist belts. One man turned to shout a welcome to the brothers, but his greeting died upon his lips, the group growing silent the moment they noticed the stunning woman walking sandwiched between the two men. Hudson noted that many of the men they passed had a look of avarice in their eyes. He and Brett would have their hands full protecting what was now theirs.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 6

Alisha stared about her nervously. This was an entirely different world to the one she was used to. Many “hairy people”—as she thought of them—were scattered about the settlement. They dressed in a strange hodgepodge of ugly garments—tops with ragged sleeves and pants that had tears at the knees. These people looked fierce to her, with their uncut hair and untamed beards. More like beasts than human beings. She shuddered. Where were the smiling faces of welcome she’d become so accustomed to in her world? The two huge men who’d rescued her were scary enough, but to be confronted by so many hostile looking people…it utterly unnerved her. Her stomach twisted in knots, panic threatening.

Dwellings were dotted about in a large horseshoe design. To her eyes, the buildings looked to be built of a very peculiar mix of materials. Most seemed to be old brick, not unlike the houses people had lived in before the Great War. Alisha had seen pictures of the old society stored in the Hive’s archives. It occurred to her that perhaps these ancient buildings were actually original to pre-war years. The houses were roofed in an odd shiny surface which she guessed might be for storing solar energy. Shuttered openings were mostly covered in wooden panels. Since some were glazed, she guessed the apertures had once upon a time been fully glazed. Perhaps glass was not easy to replace in their backward society? Every property had a series of steps which led up to the entrance.

Her rescuers, or captors—she wasn’t yet certain how to regard them—led her toward one of the large houses, set farther back away from the other

dwellings. They urged her up the steps and reaching the doorway, ushered her inside. Hudson turned and lifted a bar which barricaded the door behind her, an act which did nothing to ease her gut-churning fear.

“Hudson, Brett, that you?” a reedy voice called.

“Yeah, it’s us, Gram,” Hudson replied.

“Did you catch anything?” the same voice asked.

“Kinda…” Brett yelled back, casting a wicked grin at her, and winking at his brother.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” came the testy reply.

“Come along, this-a-way,” Hudson said. Turning, he took her arm and guided her down a hallway into a dimly lit room with grungy walls and strange shabby furniture where she saw what appeared to be a bundle of rags on an oddly padded seat. On closer inspection it turned out to be a human—an ancient crone. Alisha had seen such creatures depicted in fairy tales from another era. The creature sat huddled in a chair frame with what looked like thick arms on either side. It dawned on her that this was a very old-fashioned type of seat.

Hudson shoved Alisha forward. “We found this woman from the sky city.”

“Oh my… come closer, child.” The old woman hooked a finger at her, and Alisha crossed to stand in front of the chair. Her brain froze in shock at the sight before her. The crone’s face was shriveled, crisscrossed with many lines, some so deep they looked like cuts. A large nose and puffed skin all but obscured the old woman’s beady eyes, which peered up at her with a bright, intelligent gaze.

“Hudson, fetch the girl a chair,” she asked. “Would you like a drink?”

“Yes, please,” Alisha replied. “A coffee would be nice—or tea if you have some?”

“Coffee, tea? You have those in Sky City?” Hudson asked.

“Synthetic tea and coffee,” Alisha amended. “Not the real thing,”

“Ah…” Hudson nodded.

“Brett, go and fetch us both something to eat and drink,” the old lady commanded. “Then both of you leave us be.”

To Alisha’s complete astonishment the two behemoths meekly moved to do the crone’s bidding.

Once seated in a similar chair to her hostess, the woman introduced herself. “I’m Betty, and grandmother to those two oafs out there, on their mother’s side. Their parents died shortly after Hudson was born.”

“I see…” Alisha said. “May I ask how old you are?”

“I’m eighty next year.” Betty must have seen the surprise on her face because she grinned. Alisha was horrified to see the woman was missing some of her teeth.

“Yes, it is a great age to be, isn’t it?” the woman preened. “Not many make it to my age nowadays.”

Alisha had never seen anyone who looked so ancient before today. In her world no one appeared to be over thirty, the optimizer drug that they all took ensured cosmetic suspension. A woman’s aging process was reduced, but disease could still be a factor of aging, as with her own mother, Elizabeth.

Alisha’s doubtful expression must have alerted Betty to her inner thoughts.

“What are you not saying, my dear?” she asked suspiciously.

Alisha remained silent, but couldn’t help the heated flush of embarrassment she felt stain her cheeks.

“Don’t be stubborn or shy with me, girl. I’m the one who’ll decide if you stay or go.”

Alisha gave a grunt of dissatisfaction.

“Does that surprise you?” The woman chuckled, jerking her thumb at the open doorway. “I rule this household, not those two males out there. There is a shortage of females in this world, as you no doubt know. Although men

like to think they're in control, it is actually the women who hold the real power. I'm one of the head honchos in this town. In this house what I say goes. You looked astonished. What part of this surprises you, dear? Be open and honest with me."

She blurted the uppermost fear in her mind. "Am I to be harmed?"

"Not on my watch, you won't be. If you break a rule, then I guess one of my boys might punish you." The old lady leaned over and patted her arm. "Now then, don't look so scared, a hot bottom never harmed anyone…"

"A hot…bottom. You mean like a spanking?" Alisha asked nervously.

"Yup, a good old-fashioned spanking," Betty said. "But don't you worry yourself about that. Tell me where you're from and how you come to be here." Before Alisha could open her mouth to reply, Brett and Hudson arrived with cups and dishes. They picked up two small battered wooden tables which they set beside each chair and placed the meal down so she and Betty could reach the food.

"Shoo!" Betty flapped her hands at them. Each brother cast their grandmother a glowering scowl. Alisha covered her amused smirk with a palm. They soon departed, leaving the two women alone again.

Alisha picked up the dish and studied the items scattered on her plate. There was a thick slab of seed-riddled bread she recognized from pictures, and what appeared to be green berries, along with red fruit. But the pinkish-brown slice of…*something* had her completely stumped. "Excuse me, but what is this?" she asked Betty, showing her the plate, and pointing to the slice.

"Pork. You're in luck. We had to slaughter Bethany, the hog. The old sow jus' got so darn ornery she had to go."

Alisha gagged. "Y-you eat *flesh*?" She shuddered with shock.

"Sure do. What do you eat, then?"

She watched in horror as Betty tore off a piece of pig flesh and stuffed it into her mouth. Bile flooded her throat. Leaping to her feet Alisha fled the room, ran down the passage back towards the entrance where she'd arrived,

oblivious to the shouts of the men behind her. She lifted the heavy wooden bar used to secure the door and dropped it aside. Yanking the door wide, she ran outside—and immediately vomited what little was left in her stomach.

“Here.” Brett handed her a wet cloth to wipe her mouth.

“Feel better?” a male voice asked, appearing on her other side.

Alisha tried to nod, but the movement caused a swirling giddiness in her head. Darkness closed over her, as blessed oblivion claimed her.

* * *

Opening her eyes, Alisha blinked, disoriented. Where was she? She appeared to be lying on a bed covered by a quilt, and as she shifted the realization that she was stark naked caused her to still. Who had undressed her?

“Drink,” a male commanded. Jolted by the voice, her memory flooded back, and her heart sank.

Her head was gently raised, and a cup placed at her lips. Obediently she sipped the cool water. Her brain demanded she ask if the water was contaminated but her body overruled her head; she was desperately thirsty and needed fluids.

“You gave us all quite a scare. I gather it was the sight of the meat that caused the problem?”

She recognized Hudson’s voice. “Yes,” she replied, suffering another wave of nausea at the thought of eating flesh.

“I have some broth here. I’m going to feed you, and you *will* eat it. Understand?”

Stupefied by the command in his voice she obediently turned her head to meet his stern gaze. “Is there—?”

“Just eat it,” he said. “You need the nourishment.”

She wanted to ask what broth was and if it contained flesh, but he presented a spoon to her lips.

“Open,” he demanded.

Reluctantly she took a small sip of the soup. It was delicious. Opening her mouth wider she took a whole spoonful. Before long, the bowl was empty.

Where was her resistance? What strange power did he wield over her which caused her to obey his commands?

Hudson reached behind him and handed her a chunk of buttered bread, remaining silent as she took a bite.

“*Ooo…my…hmm-mm*. that’s good,” she mumbled through the mouthful. Bread tasted wonderful.

He grinned at her and his stance relaxed as he watched her finish the bread. “Better?” he asked in a baritone drawl as she took her final swallow.

“Thank you, that was delicious!”

Hudson nodded. “Gramm’s special vegetable broth and Brett’s bread; always a great combination.”

Taking a gentle hold of her chin, Hudson wiped her mouth clean with a cloth.

She met his speculative gaze, mesmerized by his dark eyes which seemed to reach into her soul. These men were nothing like the clean shaven, pretty men she’d fantasized over in the movies she’d watched.

No, these guys were *rugged*. Power exuded from every pore of their well-developed muscles and strongly defined features. Prominent cheek bones combined with the sculptured planes of their faces, their square jaws set in a determined way which resonated deep within her, tugging at her emotions, these males reminded her of the protective men in the movies she’d watched.

His eyes dropped, and something shifted in his stance. She followed his scrutiny downward and realized her naked chest was revealed. Her cheeks

flamed. Clutching the bedclothes, she dragged them up to cover her bare breasts. “Where is my bodysuit?” she hissed.

“We took it off you in order to study the fabric,” Hudson explained. “You can’t walk about dressed that way, living here.”

“In what way?” she asked, confused.

“Showing your body off in that skin-tight suit.” Hudson’s lips pursed into a thin line of disapproval. “You’ll end up causing a fight or raped if you parade about dressed like that.”

She tipped her chin defiantly. “It’s what we wear in the Hive. The suits are practical and aid freedom of movement. The human form is beautiful, and the suit simply shows off a sculptured body to best advantage. I’m not a savage!”

Hudson clicked his tongue. “Meaning I am? I’m amazed your men allow you to dress in such a provocative way.”

“There are no men other than a few breeding males. But they are kept locked away somewhere. They never see us—and we never see them.”

“No *men?* There are no men living in the sky city? What of these breeding men?”

“You and Brett are the first human males I’ve ever seen,” she offered, shyly.

Hudson’s brow furrowed. “So, there are just a group of women living more or less alone up in the sky?”

“Not quite. We have Tech, and a city full of droids.”

“Explain that to me.” He threw her an encouraging smile.

Alisha explained about the ultra-strong building material used for the structure of the Hive and about Tech being in the very fabric of everything, from the building itself, to sustaining their lives. Explaining the creation of the androids which were linked to Tech and to one another, she told him about the storing of lifetime memories which were fed into the droids built as replicas of dead people, including her own mother, Elizabeth.

She appreciated the fact that Hudson listened to her explanation without interruption, allowing her to finish speaking before he asked questions.

“So, this graphene material actually conducts electricity?” Hudson asked as she came to a halt.

“Yes, the substance also collects solar energy which provides much of our power needs. It transmits communication and enables all engineering in the fabric of our lives, including Tech and the droids.”

“I see…”

She waited as Hudson fell silent, obviously absorbing what she had told him.

“Are you a virgin?” he asked out of the blue.

Astonished by the question, she stared at him in embarrassment.

“Well, are you?” he insisted as she remained silent.

“I-I… well, that is to say… I have been with a sex droid,” she stuttered quietly, mortified.

“Shit…”

“What?” she asked, irritated by his disparaging tone, and shake of his head.

“I’m surprised…no, shocked, that there are no actual men in your world. What happens to the men you breed from when they are no longer able to be, er, productive?”

“By productive, d’you mean,” she asked, baldly. “Able to produce sperm?”

“Well, yeah.” Hudson ran a hand over his chin, a sheepish look on his face.

“As far as I know there are only a few males kept at a time, and they’re replaced by the time they reach their early twenties.”

He looked at her with narrowed eyes. “*Replaced?*”

She squirmed, uncomfortable at this line of questioning. She was being forced to face ethical facts she’d avoided thinking about. “With new stock,”

she answered softly.

“We are talking about human lives here,” he said, his voice suddenly stern.

“I didn’t know—and I’m not sure anyone else knows—that there is a thriving community of humans living down here on the surface and—”

“Bullshit!” Hudson snarled.

“Huh?”

“If, as you say, Tech is in the very fabric of the Hive, then it stands to reason they must know about us.”

What he said made sense. “What if Tech didn’t share that knowledge with the Council?” she mused.

“Look I think you should get some sleep. I have to go to a meeting of the elders to explain your arrival and stake our claim on you…”

“What?” she squealed indignantly.

“Easy girl. If we don’t claim you, another group will. I’m telling you we’re your best bet. I’m thinking of a way to get you back up into your elitist palace in the sky. I can assure you no other men will be willing to let a prize like you go.” Hudson patted her blanket-covered thigh. “Rest easy tonight and we’ll talk more in the morning.”

“All right,” she said. “But tell me your idea about how I can get back home before you go,”

“If your Tech is, as you say, in the very fabric of the building, then if you stand close enough to the base and speak it should be able to hear you—”

Alisha flung her arms around his neck and cut off whatever else he’d been about to say. “That is a brilliant deduction! Why on Earth didn’t I think of that?” Hudson disentangled her arms from his neck and stood up. “You’re in shock, and not fully functioning. Rest now. We’ll talk more tomorrow. Sleep well, honey.” He turned and crossed to the door.

“Hudson?” she called.

“Yeah?”

“Thank you. I know I haven’t seemed very grateful since you rescued me… but I want you to know I *am* grateful to you for your family’s kindness.”

Grunting, he smiled warmly back at her and then gently closed the door behind him.

Alisha lay in the darkened room. Hudson was right—Tech should be able to hear her if she spoke to the base of the Hive’s structure. It worried her knowing there were a prolific number of humans living on the ground, and it appeared no one in the Hive knew about them. How could that be? Tech *must* have known about the people here, yet it was keeping the knowledge from them. Surely it could not make that kind of secret decision on its own? If it could, what did that mean for the women of her world?

Her mind shifted to the two men who’d found her and brought her here. Could she trust them? She wanted to, but why was that? She felt odd around them, unsure of how she should act. Her body reacted strangely when she was in their company. The fluttering nervousness in her belly was disconcerting, as was the peculiar yearning which coursed through her veins when one of them touched her. They repelled and attracted her in equal measure.

She shivered and pulled the covers tight around her. Yawning, Alisha closed her eyes and pushed away the images which crowded her mind. Drained, her body craved rest, and she gave into that need, exhaustion overtaking her until she finally drifted off to sleep.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 7

"She's a virgin."

"How the hell did you manage to find that out?" Brett asked, his eyes narrowing suspiciously.

"Grow up, little brother. I didn't fuck her. I asked her about her world. They only have women living up there. Well, that's not quite true. There's a *city* of androids which hold the memories of thousands of dead women—"

"They *what?"* Brett interrupted. "You've got to be kidding."

"Nope. Alisha has had sex with a sex droid, but has never been with a man." Hudson still couldn't quite believe that himself.

"*Shit.* You told her we were claiming her, right?"

"Yeah, but she has a condition."

Brett sighed. "What have you promised?"

"I had to agree to try and get her home before she agreed that we could claim her. I told her if we didn't, then some other men would want her—and that seemed to spook her into agreeing. I won't let anyone else put their filthy paws on her. She's special. She needs gentle breaking in."

Brett chortled. "You mean you want to be the one to put *your* filthy paws all over her."

“I can think of more pleasurable part of my anatomy to join with hers. But first things first. We need to get to the elders meeting tonight and stake our claim before anyone else does.”

“Since Gram is on the Council of Elders, I don’t think we have much to fear on that score.” Brett grinned.

“I’m not gonna take that risk. Alisha’s a prize I’m not willing to lose.”

Brett nodded in agreement. “Let’s go and collect a claim mark for her, before those sex-starved morons try and muscle in on our woman.”

* * *

The Council cavern was not as crowded as they’d expected it to be.

The caves in this area were extensive and had been converted long ago to an underground sanctuary away from the poisoned air and devastation above. Over time, the hospital which had been built deep inside the system had been extended. There were also food storage areas which housed seasonal and dried goods, and a separate meat store which was kept in one of the coldest and deepest domains of the caverns. Hot springs kept the underground chambers at an even temperature and supplied warm water for washing, and an underground cold-water spring gave them clean drinking water. Hydroelectricity had long been used within in this underground system, provided by waterfalls in the region which had once been known as “Colorado.”

As well as the large cavern used by the governing council, there were laboratories and other workshops. Domestic living areas were built into smaller areas. Many people had opted to remain in their subterranean homes, but most of the population had chosen to move back outside, above ground. Over time the atmosphere of Earth healed, and lower levels of radiation meant life could be sustained without the risk of abnormalities.

Brett wheeled their grandmother over to the large, curved table and positioned Betty in her usual place, before returning to where Hudson was seated on one of the large wooden benches in the front row. “Not many here tonight. I’d have thought to see more men,” Hudson said.

“Hmm, perhaps word hasn’t got around yet?” Hudson said. “Did you give Gram the form?”

Brett chuckled. “Yeah, she seems almost as excited as we are about placing a claim.”

“Don’t get too complacent. The girl might not go through with the ceremony. Remember, this is only the first step…” Hudson looked up as the clerk called the meeting to order.

“Council is come to order. All rise!”

* * *

“That went like clockwork,” Brett said with satisfaction as the meeting drew to a close.

“Tomorrow comes the hard part, convincing our girl to sign,” Hudson reminded him.

Brett leered. “I know my hard part wants her to!”

“Don’t be so fucking crude.” Hudson punched his brother’s arm.

“Are you two boys gonna to take me home or what?” Betty called over.

Hudson glared at his brother and went to fetch Gram in her wheelchair.

“I’m mighty relieved you two boys are finally settling down. Who knows, I might even get to see my first great grandbaby before I die,” Betty said wistfully.

“Now, Gram, you know you have to live forever.” Brett leaned over and kissed his grandmother’s cheek. “What are me and Hudson gonna do without you to take care of us?”

“Oh, get away with you. Grown men don’t need their aged grandmothers hanging around. Besides, I’ve not seen a more capable pair of men. You two had better treat that princess right—or you won’t get to be her Husdoms.”

Brett grinned. Betty was flushed with pleasure and pride. Both men knew how much Betty doted on them.

Their parents had died young; they were the first generation to live back above ground. Radiation did not aid longevity. Betty had remained in their cave along with the two small boys, all of them eager to move out into the fresh air and their new home. Unfortunately, it was slightly too soon, and a number of the surface workers had died of malignancies.

Ten years on, it had been a different story. Betty and the young brothers had moved into the house their parents had begun to renovate, but without suffering any ill effects.

Brett thought about how life would change with their own woman to care for them—and they for her. Betty had been loving, yet strict, instilling a respect for the female sex into her lusty young charges. He had too much admiration for his Gram to disobey her. Unlike many other men of their township, he and his brother valued women and had an innate desire to protect and cherish the female population. It annoyed Brett when men saw women as purely breeding machines. As far as he and Hudson were concerned, a Husdom was responsible for the whole family group, even after the breeding had ended.

“You’re quiet,” said Hudson, interrupting his thoughts.

“Yeah, I was just thinking about us becoming Husdoms. I’m not sure I want another female after Alisha stops breeding. It seems kind of…callous to me.”

“As I said before, don’t get ahead of yourself. She needs to agree to become ours first.”

They came to the ramp that led out of the underground system and out into the cool night air.

“I never get tired of breathing in fresh air,” Betty commented from her chair.

Entering the house, Brett helped Betty to her room, leaving her with a promise to return with a drink after he’d locked up. Hudson went to check on Alisha.

He’d just bolted the door when Hudson yelled out. “Sonofabitch, she’s gone!”

* * *

Alisha woke with a start. It was dark. “Light,” she called.

Nothing happened.

“Tech, light!” Still no light. Groggily, she dragged herself upright and swung her legs out of bed. The day’s events came flooding back, and immediately her senses shifted to high alert. Listening intently, she could hear nothing other than her own heart thumping. Nature called, so she stumbled across the room to where she knew the bathroom was situated.

Washing her hands in the basin, where the lever to obtain water from a metal spout was easy to maneuver, she mulled over her earlier conversation with Hudson. She needed to speak with Tech and return to her own life in the Hive. She didn’t belong here in Brett and Hudson’s world. The two brothers totally unsettled her, and she didn’t understand her own reaction to them. That scared her.

She wanted to return home to her safe pod, desperately needing to be in the safety of the Hive. Slipping her feet into her boots, Alisha made her way stealthily down the stairs. Where had they put her body suit? It would be cold outside in the dark and she needed the hermetic suit for warmth. Creeping into the kitchen she saw it hung on the back of a chair. It took a few moments to step into it and zip it up.

A dog barked as she slipped down between the dwellings, heading in the direction of the river, and keeping the woodland to her right and the river to her left, which she felt sure would lead her back to the Hive. Loud screeching filled the air, and she froze.

What the fuck was that?

A large bird swept across her path with a fearful shriek. Alisha dropped to all fours, shaking in fear; she waited. When nothing happened, she stood and continued her journey. It was nerve wracking walking through the dark

knowing there might be hungry predators out there, but sheer tenacity kept her moving onward.

After an hour of walking in the dark, fearful of every rustle and deeper shadow, she halted, tired and frustrated. Surely, she should have found the Hive by now? Glancing about her uncertainly, Alisha sighed. How was she supposed to see in the darkness? A glint of something up ahead caught her eye and she squinted into the gloom. The moon suddenly appeared from behind a cloud, and she could make out the Hive silhouetted against the sky. Relief flooded her at the welcome sight.

The base of the structure was immense. Placing her palms on the gunmetal gray wall, she calmed, her heart rate gradually slowing. “Tech, it’s me,” she whispered. “You know I’m missing…my bubble pod was struck by lightning and fell to the ground. How do I get back up into the Hive?”

But there was only silence.

She slapped her hand against the wall. “Tech, I know you can hear me! I’m not stupid. You are *in* the graphene, in every part of the Hive, so answer me, damn you!” She waited, but still there was nothing.

The screeching bird called in the distance, and she shuddered. “Tech, I order you to alert the Senate to the fact that I’m still alive!” But no response came.

“How dare you ignore me!” Wound up and furious, she began to yell, panicked by the continued silence from the building. “I insist on speaking to Elizabeth! I *demand* to speak with her. It is the rule of the Hive that I have that right. *Tech*!” Tears gathered, and she brushed them from her cheeks, exasperated. She slumped to the ground, her back against the structure, and she wept bitter tears of frustration. “Please, Elizabeth, you can’t abandon me…”

“*You cannot return, Alisha. There is a huge risk of radiation and other contaminants you might carry into the Hive. We must consider the other women.*”

“Elizabeth!” She jumped to her feet, relief flooding through her, which overshadowed the droid’s negative reply. “Thank goodness! Please explain.

How I get back home?”

“*As I stated, you cannot return to the Hive, Alisha. Although you are alive, the risk of radiation and other contaminants such as any viruses you may have absorbed could wipe out the entire population of the Hive, and—”*

“*No!* You have to get me home! You don’t *understand*! I *cannot* remain here. There are men here, and animals who mean me harm.” Desperation flooded her. She had to make Tech, the collective brain, understand. “Elizabeth, please. *I can’t stay here!*”

“*Calm down, Alisha. You must stay there, but you can help the Hive by reporting back to us and letting us know about life on the ground. We know there are people living there, but we know extraordinarily little about how they live, or how healthy they are. You can help us to learn about them—”*

“Really? Is that why you try and kill them with your flying drones? You’re lying to me…”

“*No, I am not. The machines are primed to never aim their lasers to kill or to wound. The drones are programmed to fire above the people’s heads. They are merely sent as a deterrent. One day we hope to reinstate the women of the Hive back onto the Earth’s surface where they will reintegrate with the people who already live there. But before we can achieve this, we need certain information. For instance, we need samples of their hair, which will tell us about the radiation levels and other contaminants which might reside within their flesh. We need to know about the flora and fauna now growing on the surface. I need information about the species of different animals that have survived and evolved.*

Alisha, you are in a unique position, able to catalog important information for your fellow women of the Hive. This kind of knowledge would be invaluable to us, enabling us to help those living on the surface, as well as the population of the Hive. You alone can achieve this, to help all society and the future of your race. Remember what we spoke about regarding the cloning program? We know it is not the best way forward for reproduction; the pitfalls are too great for humankind. Our aim is to restore the women of the Hive to a healthy and sustainable way of life. Surely you want the same thing, Alisha?”

Do I? Is that what I really want? No, not if it means remaining here at the mercy of two men who want me to breed their children for them.

"*Alisha*?"

"I just want to come home!" she wailed.

"*You have our answer. There is no more to be said. When you have some information for us, we will speak again. Goodbye*."

"NO!" she yelled, smacking her fists against the unforgiving surface of the structure. "NO! You *must* tell the Senate that I'm alive, Tech!"

"Alisha, what were you thinking running off in the dark?"

Ignoring the baritone growl which came out of the darkness behind her, she continued to scream abuse at the Hive. Then strong hands hauled her away from the building's side. She struggled against the grip which imprisoned her arms at her sides.

"Calm down, hell cat! Do you know how dangerous it is out here?" She recognized Brett's voice.

"You're coming home with us, which is where you now belong," Hudson said.

She didn't want to calm down. She was livid and desperate. The suddenness of being tossed over his shoulder knocked the breath from her lungs as she was toted away from the shadow of the Hive. "No-o!" she yelled. A slap landed on her bottom, and she stilled in shock. He'd smacked her! Her anger quadrupled. "How dare you!" she screeched in rage, thrashing her legs. There was no way she would allow one of them to spank her again.

"Oh honey, I dare a lot more than that. Quiet down now, before you find out just how much I dare."

Inflamed by Brett's words, she reared back and sank her teeth into his shoulder. There was a bellow of rage and she dropped back onto the ground. Looking up, she stared into the contorted face of Brett. He looked positively furious, his eyes narrowed, his mouth pressed into a thin line, a visible twitch in his jaw.

“You bit me,” he stated, his tone ominously low.

Shivers trailed down her spine.

“Now you’ve gone and done it,” Hudson said.

Alisha frowned. Looking over at Hudson’s face she felt bewildered at his knowing grin. Why did he look so pleased? She had no time to ponder the fact.

Brett leaned down, grasped her arm, and pulled her to her feet. Then he took off once again toward the forest, his rapid pace causing her to stumble in her attempts to keep up with him. The man made no concessions as he yanked her along beside him.

Where the hell is he taking me?

The question was soon answered as the dark outline of a fallen tree came into sight. Digging in her heels, she fought him; there was no way she was going to be spanked, not this time. Brett simply bent and lifted her back over his shoulder. At the tree trunk he placed his booted foot up on the log and before she could blink, Alisha found herself tossed across his hard thigh. A sharp slap landed on her left buttock, quickly followed by another to her right. She winced and wriggled. An arm clamped down around her waist, securing her in place.

“Have we treated you with disrespect?” he asked, landing another spank to her upturned backside.

“N-no,” she stammered.

More hard slaps rained down and she gasped at the sting.

“So, you agree we haven’t ill-treated you?” he continued.

“Y-yes,” she replied, beginning to see where this conversation, was going. His hand clapped against her rump causing her to squeal.

“Then I’d like an explanation, girl.” His deep voice was full of condemnation. The blows were harder to bear now her bottom was heating up. Her body suit offered no protection as far as she could tell and she was sure she couldn’t stand many more blows, not after her previous spanking.

In the movies she'd illicitly watched, the spankings had looked so sexy, but she was discovering the actual experience was anything but. It was humiliating, and it *hurt!* "Stop!" she cried, unable to withstand anymore.

"I don't think so, honey. You don't get to bite one of your Husdoms and get away with it!"

Husdoms?

"One of my what?" she managed to squeak.

"Yeah, baby, we asked if we could claim you at the Council meeting last night. They granted us the right to remand you as ours." Every word he spoke was punctuated with another smack.

"Wait…without my consent?" she cried, incensed.

"You get to spend a month with us and at the end of that month you'll decide if you want to stay with us," Hudson said. "If the answer is yes, we sign the family contract together, and we become your Husdoms. If you don't want to stay with us, you get to select another group of males to live with for yet another month. At the end of that trial the same thing will apply. You get three chances to choose, but after that you must select from one of those three groups. If you don't make a decision, all the men you have lived with will fight for you. The winner takes you to breed. That is what it means to be a remanded woman."

This information only served to enrage her further. She hadn't noticed his approach, intent as she was on what was happening to her benighted rear end. "Remanded for what?"

"Remanded to breed."

The thought of these two masculine men, oozing such confidence and sexual virility, taking her as their own resonated deeply. Her emotions were unraveling. Confused with inner conflict between her hidden desires and opposing views, she began to struggle in earnest. Kicking and slapping at Brett's booted calves, she swore and shrieked in rage.

The next series of searing blows to her bottom stilled her frantic actions. A wail tore from her throat. It was clear that Brett had been holding back until

now. Apologies slipped, unbidden, from her lips, and she made him every promise she could think of. Her backside was now scorching under his large, punishing palm, and she begged him to halt. To her astonishment she found herself lifted upright and seated on the very thigh she had been laid across seconds before.

Brett drew her close, wrapping her in his embrace. His masculine scent filled her nostrils and flooded her senses; his pheromones drew her to him. She burrowed her face into the curve of his neck and shoulder, breathing him in with a sigh. She slid her hands around his torso and thrilled at the ripple of the taut muscles which moved under her palms. His very physique spoke of strength, security, and protection. His husky voice offered words of comfort, eliciting a sudden, inexplicable rush of desire for him. The punishment and aftercare ignited some deep need within her to please him.

Overhead came a screeching cry; it was from the large night bird. She clung to Brett fearfully.

“It’s only an owl,” Hudson said as his hand brushed the tousled hair back from her tear-stained cheek. “Nothing to fear, sweetheart.” His voice seemed to be the trigger for Brett to set her back onto her feet. She wobbled and Hudson slid a strong arm around her waist to support her.

“We need to get back. It’s extremely late. We can explain the rules to you in the morning. I take it you couldn’t get back into this Hive of yours?” he asked.

She shook her head.

“Words, Alisha,” he prompted sternly.

She realized that it was too dark for him to see her gesture. “No, it seems I’m destined to remain here with you.” The situation seemed ever more hopeless.

“It will be a good life with us, you’ll see,” Hudson replied.

She was too exhausted and too confused to argue the point. And it *was* possible he might even be right.

Resigned, at least for the time being, she allowed the two burly men to lead her back to their township.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 8

Alisha awoke late and lay quietly assimilating what had occurred the previous night. Tech had wounded her deeply by not allowing her to return to the Hive. She realized she was stuck with two unappealing choices. She could run away from these people and try and live alone—a thought which she instantly dismissed, knowing she would not survive alone for long in the wild. Or she could accept this society's stipulation and allow herself to be claimed. The thought of any men other than Brett and Hudson taking her body sexually was abhorrent. As embarrassed as she was by the spankings both men had doled out yesterday, she was also honest enough to admit her attraction to the brothers. Not allowing her unsettled thoughts to dwell upon what the day might bring, she arose and went to the shower. Her command of "Shower on," elicited zero response. She needed to ask Betty how to turn the water on. There was nothing for it but to strip wash, something she had never had to do before.

Since her body suit appeared to be missing from the chair where she'd left it on the previous night, she dressed in the odd clothes she found in a closet. Gazing in the closet mirror, she saw the dress she'd donned fitted her upper body and flared from her waist. The garment made her feel strangely exposed and vulnerable, especially around her bare thighs and loins.

Arriving downstairs, she found Betty and Hudson seated together at a sturdy but battered wooden table. Betty nursed a drinking receptacle cupped in her hands.

“Ah, speak of the devil, here she is!” Betty cried, setting her cup aside. “Are you hungry, my dear?”

Alisha nodded and cast Hudson a sideways look. Her embarrassment gave way to curiosity as he stood by a large metal range which Alisha had only seen pictures of in the archives. “Eggs?” he asked conversationally.

“I don’t know.” She frowned; she’d never eaten real food before the previous night. Her meals in the Hive had been simple slabs of flavored food bars designed to give her body all the nutrients she required to remain healthy. Even the coffee was simulated by Tech. Not that she had any idea what *real* coffee would have tasted like.

Her less than enthusiastic answer didn’t seem to faze Hudson. “One fluffy omelet coming right up!”

Betty pointed to the chair opposite her. “Sit, dear.”

Alisha took a seat. “Where is Brett?” she asked, hoping he wasn’t about to appear behind her. After last night’s spanking she didn’t feel ready to face him.

“Working,” Hudson replied.

“Oh? What does he do?” She hadn’t considered that either man worked.

“Obstetrician. He looks after the health of pregnant women and delivers babies.”

“A male obstetrician!” she squeaked, unable to hide her surprise.

Hudson looked amused by her reaction and grinned. “You’ll be in safe hands with us, sweetness.”

A shiver ran over her that was not wholly caused by embarrassment.

“Do you work too?” she asked, trying not to show how much she disliked the idea that a male delivered babies.

“Yeah, I suppose I’m what people used to call an engineer.”

She didn’t reply. Her mind was still engrossed with the subject of male obstetricians.

“Brett’s work is very important to our survival,” Betty said. “My mother told me that for a long time after the bomb fell every child was a stillbirth. Time passed and gradually more and more babies survived despite suffering deformities. Nowadays, the birth rate is low due to the males’ low sperm counts. No doubt this is caused by the effects of radiation, but at least the children that are born are healthy. We just need more female children to balance our society.”

Alisha nodded her understanding. “So that’s why you need more than one male allocated to each female; there is a better chance of impregnating her.”

An awkward silence fell. Betty cleared her throat. “Would you like me to explain the rules surrounding a claiming?”

“Please,” she nodded relieved the conversation had moved on.

“They have been granted the right to claim you which will mean that they will mate with you and you will live here with us as a part of the family. You will not have sex with any other men but Hudson and Brett. You’ll be given chores to do. It is Hudson and Brett’s responsibility to protect you from danger. At the end of one month, you’ll appear before the Council of Elders and answer their questions on your Husdoms’ treatment of you. You will be asked if you wish to remain as their wife. If you don’t, you will be held up for claiming by another group of Husdoms, and go through the same process for one month. After that you can choose to move on once more, but if at the end of that period you are not happy to remain with your third group of Husdoms, you will have to decide on one of the three groups you have been living with.”

“What if I don’t like any of them at the end of three months?” she asked out of curiosity. There was no way she could envisage living with different men other than Hudson and Brett, and that thought was daunting enough.

“If the woman does not choose, then each group will select two males from among themselves to fight in a tournament for the woman. The ultimate winner takes her as theirs.”

Alisha snorted. “All sounds very medieval to me.”

“Medieval?” Betty’s forehead wrinkled in bewilderment.

Alisha realized with a jolt that none of these people had the archive facilities that she'd had access to. They wouldn't know much, if anything about what went on before the Russo-Sino war. "So, what happens if I state that I'm happy to stay here with Brett and Hudson?"

"You'll all three sign a declaration of claiming which can be nullified if you all choose at a time you are no longer able to bear them children."

She gave a shake of the head. "Huh, worse than medieval times then. At least then the woman had lifelong protection from her hus*band!* Where did this '*Husdom*' word come from anyway?"

"I wondered about your word, *husband.*" Betty said.

"It comes from the old English word *husbonda*, meaning 'male head of a household, master of a house, householder.' It's probably from Old Norse *husbondi*, 'master of the house,' literally 'house-dweller,' and from *hus* 'house' and the word *bondi* 'householder, dweller, freeholder, peasant.' At the beginning of the late thirteenth century, it replaced Old English *wer* as 'married man (in relation to his wife)' and became the companion word of wife. Slang shortened the word husband to hubby which I think was first attested to in the sixteen eighties. Now tell me where the word Husdom comes from."

She looked up and saw the open-mouthed astonishment on Betty and Hudson's faces.

"She's a walking dictionary. D'you think she's one of those androids?" Betty surmised.

"How do you know all this?" Hudson asked.

"I worked in Archives. It was part of my job to know about the past. I'm not an android, Betty." She grinned. "Your word, Husdoms?" she prompted, interested in their reply.

"I never thought about how the word came into being. It seems to have just always been there." Hudson shrugged. Turning back to the stove, he decanted the omelet onto a plate and brought it to her.

Betty twisted about and reached into a drawer, pulling out cutlery which she placed on the table. Alisha stared blankly at them. “What are these for?”

“You use them for eating,” Betty explained. “The knife is for cutting your food into bite size pieces and the fork will spear it so that you can put it into your mouth.”

It took a bit of practice but soon she was able to eat her omelet, after her initial reservations over the texture.

“Going back to your earlier question, I think the word *Husdom* has everything to do with men being the dominant species,” Betty said.

Alisha nodded. It made sense that a word would evolve, just as the original word *husbondi* had become *husband*, and now in this society evolved into *Husdom*. “Strange that the word wife hasn’t evolved in the same way,” she mused, as much to herself as to the others in the room.

“Where does that word originate from?” Hudson asked.

“Well, etymologically speaking, if we look back at Middle English and Old English, the spelling of wife is “*wif*” which some scholars believe to be related to the German word “*weib*.” However, *Wif* means woman and at some point in the past an ‘e’ was added to the word, thus creating the word ‘wife,’ which no longer means simply a woman, but a woman who is committed to a man. Or in your society’s case, a number of men.”

“I can see that you’re going to be a great asset to our own archives,” Betty praised.

Alisha’s ears pricked. “You have an archive?” she asked excitedly, looking from Betty to Hudson for confirmation.

Hudson glowered at Betty. “She’s gonna be far too busy with our training in the coming weeks to go out to work. Maybe later, if she decides to stay and accept us as her Husdoms.”

“Busy…what training?” Alisha asked, frowning.

“I’m going to move into the old cave dwelling awhile, to give you all some privacy while the boys train you as their wife,” Betty said.

“Surely I don’t need *training* for that?” Alisha asked, her voice dripping with disdain at the mere notion. Who did they think they were?

“Since you ended up with a spanking last night,” a male voice answered from the doorway, “I think you’ll find you do.”

Blushing, she swiveled around to meet Brett’s amused gaze. She quickly dropped her eyes from his.

“You’re back earlier than I expected,” Betty said. “How’s the baby?”

“Yeah, I’m exhausted after the lack of sleep last night. Luckily, it was a second birth, and the baby came easily with no complications. A girl.”

“A girl!” Betty clapped her hands.

“That is fantastic!” Hudson added.

“Yeah, it was pretty exciting,” Brett said. “The mother wept with joy. We all did, actually. I’m exhausted. I’m gonna take a shower and nap.”

To Alisha’s relief, Brett left the room. How weird that this society was short of women while the Hive was full of them. She took another bite of her breakfast. “This is so good,” she said in appreciation.

“I’m guessing you can’t cook?” Hudson asked.

“She has no need to cook with me around. I’ll teach her if she wants to learn how,” Betty chimed in.

Alisha nodded. “Yes, please…but I can’t—and won’t—touch dead animals.”

Hudson shook his head. “We need to work on finding protein you *will* eat. How about fish?”

“I don’t know, maybe,” she muttered doubtfully. “I thought they were all poisoned.”

“The rivers are filling up again. We have a Geiger counter which shows the fish we catch have incredibly low levels of radiation.”

“Well now, there are plenty of things we can feed you in the meantime,” Betty added cheerfully. “Now then, girl, your first chore as a part of the family is to wash those dirty dishes.”

Alisha gathered her plate and cup. “To the river?” she asked.

Laughter filled the room. “The sink. Over there.” Betty pointed at a place near the stove. “Hudson designed the plumbing for our water to be brought from the underground hot springs and into the houses around here. He did the same with the cold-water spring. We have hydroelectricity and solar energy for power which makes for a comfortable life.”

“Come over here,” Hudson said. “And I’ll show you what to do.”

Feeling foolish, she crossed over to where he stood and followed his directions. This was a very labor-intensive world compared to life within the Hive.

* * *

Later in the day Hudson gave her a full guided tour of the house and all the appliances that seemed to be required to run it. She was shocked to discover there was no positive air flow to remove dust from the air. This necessitated an archaic exercise in dusting and vacuuming. How did anyone find the time for real work?

Hudson took Betty off to her cave dwelling after a tasty midday meal of bread and cheese with pickles. The one delight in this backward society was the food.

To her surprise, Betty reached up to hug her before she left, and Alisha returned the woman’s gesture with genuine affection. Hudson promised to take Alisha to visit his grandmother in a day or two and Betty had patted his hand in satisfaction.

Brett appeared at the last moment to make his goodbyes. He was damp and disheveled. Alisha guessed he’d come directly from the shower.

After the others left, Brett turned to her. “Do you want anything to eat or drink?”

“Um, no, thank you. I ate with Hudson and Betty,” she replied.

“Okay. I’m going to get some grub. *Food*,” he added when she looked blankly back at him. “If you need to shower before Hudson’s return, now’s the time to do so. We will be taking you, claiming you once he’s back.”

She blanched. “So soon?”

“Soon?” He chuckled and shook his head, looking amused. “I don’t know about my brother, but I’ve been walking around with a massive hard-on since we first plucked you out of that pod thing. D’you honestly think that any of the other men would have waited so long to have a taste of your luscious charms?”

The embarrassment his words caused her sent heat prickling all over her body. Her face was hot, no doubt showing scarlet at his crude words, some of which confused her.

He stepped closer and reached out to cup her flushed cheek. He caressed her skin with his thumb. “I forget you’re unused to men. Sorry, princess. I shouldn’t have spoken so crassly.”

“S’okay,” she muttered; her eyes swiveled away, avoiding his knowing gaze. “I’ll go and um…”

As soon as he dropped his hand from her face, she fled upstairs.

* * *

“Where is she then?” Hudson asked on his return from settling their grandmother into her cave home.

“Upstairs, waiting for us to claim her.” Brett threw his brother a broad wink.

“You know we can’t rush her, right? I don’t want us to mess this up. I want her to *want* to stay with us. We have to go slow.”

Brett rolled his eyes. “I get that. What did you think I’d planned to do, rape her?”

“Don’t be such a jerk,” Hudson growled. “Of course I didn’t think that!”

“I thought I’d give her a massage to get her to relax,” Brett mused.

“Good idea. Why don’t you do that, and I’ll go take a shower and join you in a while.”

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 9

Conflicting thoughts warred within as Alisha paced the bedroom. A sense of excitement and dread churned in her gut. If she did this, there would be no going back. What if she didn't enjoy having sex with the men? After all, she'd not enjoyed the sex she'd had with her female lover or the sex droid. She stopped as a sudden thought struck her.

Suppose she fell pregnant straight away? She'd decided she didn't want to bring a child into this damaged world. What to do?

What can you do?

There was no alternative other than to run away, but she was unlikely to survive living in the wilds.

"You appear to be extremely anxious. Tell you what, why don't you let me give you a massage? That'll help you relax."

She pivoted at the sound of the husky voice. "You startled me. A… massage?"

Brett nodded and smiled. He hooked a finger, gesturing for her to follow him and left the doorway.

She trailed after him. A massage sounded nice; it had been a while since she'd had one. He was waiting in the passageway, leaning against the doorjamb of a room.

As she approached, he slipped inside what she discovered was a large bedroom, housing a huge triple-sized bed. She stared at it; full realization of what was about to happen there stopped her dead in her tracks.

“Alisha?”

She lifted her gaze to Brett as he gently called her name. He patted the far side. Gingerly she moved around to him.

Turning her about, he unbuttoned the back of her dress. She trembled as he lifted the garment over her head. Naked, she clambered up onto the high mattress and laid face down.

At least my breasts and private area can’t be seen.

Large palms rested on her shoulders and began to gently squeeze and caress her muscles.

“Relax, you’re so tense. I promise we won’t hurt you. We both want to give you pleasure.”

She hoped that was true. Relaxing under the pressure of his skilled hands, she gave a sigh as he kneaded the knots in her neck and shoulders. She calmed and sank loose limbed into the bedding. His hands moved down over her back and to her buttocks which tensed under his touch.

“Relax,” he ordered.

To her surprise, her mind seemed to empty as she slipped into a dreamy state. It was only after his palms had worked out the tension from her legs and begun their upward trajectory that she tensed up again. His fingers caressed the insides of her thighs, his touch heavenly.

Fingers lightly ran over her back and down her arms while others kneaded her buttocks.

Hang on.

She reared up. Hudson had joined Brett.

Before she could react to this development, they flipped her onto her back. Hudson drew close, taking her mouth with his. Soft lips slanted over hers.

His tongue explored the seam of her mouth, and she opened to him. But he didn't thrust inside, instead gently licking along her lower lip.

She sighed. Emboldened, she made explorations of her own, her tongue seeking his. His arm slid under her torso while his other cupped her breast, a thrill tightening deep in her belly. The hands below, so near her sex, moved higher so that they were grazing her outer folds. A rush of heat surged through her core. She moaned. Immediately her thighs were pushed apart, and something large inserted itself at her apex which prevented her legs from closing.

"Brett!" she cried.

What is he doing?

A touch elicited the most wonderful sensation in her pussy. Unable to see what he was doing, she shuddered at the exquisitely delicious sensations now electrifying her clitoris.

Hudson broke the kiss with her in order to speak. "I want a taste after you, bro."

A taste? Dear Tech!

Brett was actually licking her pussy! She couldn't help the guttural moan which escaped her lips. The bed shifted as the men swapped places. Brett ignored her lips and lowered his mouth to her chest instead, taking her hardened nipple in his mouth, his hand caressed her other breast. The swirling pressure became stronger between her legs, the sensation utterly divine. Her hips shifted involuntarily. Hudson's hands slipped under her buttocks, lifting them to meet his ravaging mouth. A connection pulsed back and forth between her nipples and her sex as ripples of pleasure coursed through her body as Hudson's curled tongue fucked her weeping channel.

Brett's mouth came down hard on hers, plundering her lips. His tongue took control of her mouth, and she tentatively probed his own in return, her confidence rising at his rumble of appreciation. His fingers continued to pluck and roll her aching nipples. It was as though all of her major erogenous zones had been electrified. "Oh, oh, oh…" she keened. These

men made her feel tiny and protected. At that moment, she felt cherished and so hot and hungry for more of the same!

A finger entered her sheath and pumped in and out, then she felt Hudson add another; he seemed to be exploring her internally. His touch found a deliciously sensitive spot deep inside her, causing her to jerk and gasp with pleasure. Then Hudson's tongue was back once more rasping against her clit. "*Ah… Um… Please… Mmm, hmm*." She was incoherent, mad with need as his clever fingers played over the pulsating spot, driving her insane. It was the sweetest kind of torture. She could feel herself spiraling upwards. Between them the brothers rocketed her into an overwhelmingly fierce orgasm. Her cries of bliss echoed about the room.

"Wow, she's amazing!" Hudson said, giving the woman lying comatose before them an admiring glance.

"I never in my wildest dreams imagined such a response," Brett replied in awe. His hand caressed Alisha's flushed cheek. Her eyes were closed and it appeared she was sleeping. He looked up at Hudson who was in the process of removing his clothes.

Brett hurriedly followed suit. Once naked, the men joined her on the bed, one on either side of her. Hudson pressed against her back, while Brett faced her. Gently, each man stroked her from her hair to her thighs, their hands roaming her silken flesh, their cocks engorged and leaking fluid as their bodies prepared to take her.

She sighed under their ministrations, her legs flung wide, loose limbed, and open to their advances. Hudson slipped his fingers between her legs, gathering her slippery lubrication which he eased up and along the crease of her buttocks, feathering his finger back and forth over her tight puckered hole.

Brett sucked her nipples, nibbling and suckling the taut peaks. He stroked the slope of her flank and down between her thighs where he encountered his brother's busy fingers. Together they played with her sex, caressing and tweaking, plunging alternately into her tight pussy. Her little sighs turned to mewls and from there they became moans of desire. She was primed and ready for the taking.

The moment had come. They would make her theirs.

Their eyes met in a silent message of satisfaction. This was it. They turned her on her back and Brett slid between her parted thighs, his thick shaft at her entrance, his upper body supported on his elbows.

Hudson slipped his hand between their bodies and found her swollen clitoris, gently pressing and rolling the tiny bud of flesh until she lifted her pelvis to press toward Brett's invading cock. With a groan of satisfaction, he felt his brother's cock slide inside the woman they'd claimed as theirs.

She whimpered at his invasion.

Brett froze, unmoving. "Fuck. Kitten, are you a virgin?" he asked, to Hudson's surprise.

"I didn't think so, I have orgasmed before…?"

Gently Hudson grazed her cheek with his thumb, her amazing green eyes fixing upon him, eyes which right now looked cloudy with confusion.

"Honey," he asked gently. "Did the sex droid put anything into your vagina when you had sex with it?"

"No, I told it to go away before it did anything like that…am I a virgin then?"

"Not anymore," Brett replied dryly. "I'm going to move a bit now, sweetness. Let me know if it hurts too much. Hudson will help you…"

Hudson rolled to his side and kissed her soundly. He slipped his hand back between her and Brett's bodies to find her clitoris again, teasing it until it was erect once more. He hoped he was distracting her from the discomfort her first fucking was causing her. His manipulations appeared to be working as her panting turned to sighs against his mouth. Using his tongue, he set up a plundering thrust between her lips, matching his brother's lunging hips; his mouth swallowing her ever increasing moans. Her head turned sideways as her cries marked the pleasure which built to a peak. Hudson's cock ached, throbbing with need as he watched the copulating couple grind against each other fiercely; their amorous grunts and groans driving his own desire to be inside her to a fever pitch.

He drew back, fisting his cock. Alisha convulsed with a cry as Brett reared up with a guttural growl. With a husky moan Hudson ejaculated onto her breasts, then the three of them collapsed in a heap. The brothers curled about her.

“You are so beautiful,” Brett told her huskily.

Hudson caressed her hair, twirling a long curl around his finger. “I love the color of your hair. One minute it seems to glow like fire, the next it shimmers amber, like whiskey.”

They cuddled her, murmuring praise until her eyelids fluttered and finally closed, whereupon Hudson kissed each one tenderly before settling himself down to sleep. Snores emanating from Alisha’s other side indicated Brett was already asleep.

* * *

She must have slept soundly for when she awoke, she was alone, cocooned in the giant bed. Rolling onto her back, she recalled her claiming. It had been quite different from how she’d imagined. Both men had been gentle and considerate—which she hadn’t expected. What’s more, only one of the men had taken her, when she’d expected to be used by both of them and this had surprised her. The strangest thing though, was the pleasure which the coupling had given her, the pure delight of such a powerful and wondrous orgasm something totally unexpected.

“You’re awake. I brought you a hot drink and some toast.” It was Hudson.

She sat up and reached for the tray he held.

He positioned himself on the side of the bed. “How do you feel?”

“Fine.” She sipped the drink. It was pleasant, but it was a combination of flavors she didn’t recognize. “What’s this made of?” she asked, taking another taste.

“Herbs, honey, and hot water. Gram dries the herbs, but don’t ask me which ones. So, you’re…not sore?”

She shook her head, embarrassed by the question.

“Brett was called out to a birth, but he will examine you later.”

Startled, she lifted her gaze to his. “There is…no need to examine me.”

“He’s a doctor, sweetheart, and it was your first time with a man. We both need to know you are all right and well enough for me to claim you. We want to know that it will be safe for you when both of us decide to claim you together.”

“You mean at the same time?” she squeaked. “You won’t both fit in. You’ll tear me apart!”

He made a soothing noise in his throat. “No, not both of us in your pussy! Not at the same time, anyway. Neither of us want your little vagina stretched that wide. No, honey, one of us will take your tight ass while the other one fucks your snug, wet pussy.”

Heat flooded her body as his filthy words painted a vivid picture in her mind.

Dear Tech!

A deep pulse began in her core reminding her of how she’d felt after Brett had taken her virginity. “That is…I mean…*You can’t!”* she stuttered, shocked by the very idea of a man breaching her private hole. Unable to meet his eye, she dipped her head, hair falling about her heated face, shielding her discomfort from him until a warm hand cupped her chin and forced her gaze up to him.

“Would you like to speak to a woman around your own age? My cousin, Rhina, lives nearby. Apparently, she called in yesterday and spoke to Gram —who’s also her grandmother. She’s dying to meet you. Maybe she could come on over and chat with you? She’d be able to answer some of your questions.”

That sounded good. She nodded and Hudson dropped his hand from her face, smoothing her hair back and cupping it behind her head, drawing her to his lips in a gentle, but insistent kiss. Immediately the pulse between her legs throbbed back to life, her sex growing wet once again. His woodsy

male scent engulfed her senses and as his tongue swept into her mouth, she knew she would lie with him if he so desired. What was this spell these men wielded over her body that she became so wanton at their very touch?

“I’m gone a couple of hours and you have your hands all over her,” a male voice growled from the doorway.

She attempted to withdraw from Hudson’s hold, but he kept her in place and lazily finished the kiss before releasing her.

“You’ve had your first claim, you smug bastard. Whereas *I’ve* had to wait—along with a pair of aching balls—until you got back here to check her over.”

She worried the two men were about to fight, and shrank back against her pillows.

Brett chuckled and she realized this was how the two men bantered. Would she ever understand them and their thought processes?

“Hi, kitten,” Brett said, crossing to sit on the opposite side of the bed from Hudson. He dropped a kiss on her lips. “How are you feeling?”

Her face heated with a blush once again. “F-fine.” Seeing them both together brought back images of what they had done together; specifically, what *Brett* had done to her.

“Don’t be embarrassed, sweetheart. Everything we shared is natural and right. It’s what men and women were designed to do together, to give and take pleasure, and in your case, to create life. I’d like to check you over, since it was your first time with a man. I want to make certain all is right with you, and that you are well enough to take Hudson next—and soon the both of us.”

His soft, husky voice both reassured and unsettled her in equal measure.

“You take a shower and join us downstairs for something to eat. Then I’ll give you a physical checkup, okay?”

She nodded her agreement. The two men stood, and each brushed her forehead with a kiss before departing, leaving her alone to finish her drink.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 10

Rising, she left the room and returned to the one originally allocated for her use. Stepping into the shower cubicle, she said, “Water on.” And waited.

Nothing happened.

“Turn on water.” Still nothing. “On!” she demanded.

Still nothing.

Studying the wall, she noticed a panel with a hand shape etched upon it. Placing her palm over it, warm water immediately cascaded down from above. A rack on the side wall held a tan-colored block, which when she grasped it with her wet hands, became slippery and scudded to the floor. Retrieving it and rubbing it between her palms, she guessed correctly that it was a substance used for washing.

Clean and refreshed, she replaced her palm over the panel and the shower ceased. “Dry,” she commanded, but as before nothing happened. Studying the cubicle, she could find nothing to indicate an option for turning on warm air. She looked out into the room and saw a large cloth hanging on a rail. Stepping out she reached for it and unfolded it, using the thick material to dry herself.

Rummaging through the various drawers in her bedroom she discovered clothing similar to the men’s, all worn tops and threadbare pants. She pulled out a top and what looked like half a body suit which she pulled up her legs.

In the top drawer she discovered a comb and drew it through her tangled mane. With little choice but to leave her hair damp, she headed downstairs.

The meal was a fish wrapped in something they called a ‘pastry crust.’ It tasted divine, although her initial reaction had been to refuse to eat a dead fish. As soon as she’d sat down, she’d pushed the plate away from her, but Hudson had fixed her with a stern look. “Alisha.”

One authoritatively spoken word, with undertones of warning, gave her pause.

Knowing she had no option but to obey, she marveled anew at these men’s ability to command her. Sliding the dish back in front of her, Alisha picked up her fork and hesitantly took a morsel of the baked fish. After that initial taste, she ate every scrap on her plate.

“Finished?” Brett asked. “Come on, then.”

Looking up, she saw both men had risen to their feet. Reluctantly she stood and followed them from the room. Brett led the way down a passage to a door which he opened with a key. He stood back so Hudson and she could enter. Inside it was clean and utilitarian. A long, steel-legged table with a padded top took center stage while several medical pieces of equipment stood at various points about the room. It all looked extremely archaic to Alisha who was used to the Hive medical rooms where scanners were used for almost everything. Invasive practices and procedures were very rare, except when operations were necessary.

Instinctively she tried to edge her way back out of the room, but Hudson positioned himself in front of the doorway. A large hand settled on her shoulder, causing her to start.

“Jumpy, are we? There’s no need to worry, you know. I won’t hurt you,” Brett said reassuringly. “Take your clothes off and hop up on the couch, please.”

Slowly she did as he asked and removed her top and pants. As soon as she stood naked, her awareness of the two men intensified. She covered her mons with one hand and her breasts with the other. Shifting her gaze to

Hudson she noticed his eyes held a glittering focus missing from moments before. Her breath caught in her throat; he'd looked at her that way before.

"Up you come!" Brett scooped her up and deposited her on the examination table. "Lie down and relax." She lay down as instructed, but found relaxing out of the question. First, he rubbed his palms together as though to warm them and then he reached out to cup her head, then gently moved his fingers over her neck from front to back. "Just examining your lymph glands." He flashed a reassuring grin at her and she smiled tentatively at him.

"All fine. Open your mouth, please."

She did as he requested, watching as he selected a flat stick to depress her tongue. "Say a*hhh*," he instructed, and she obeyed. "That's a girl; looks good." He winked at her and dropped his hands to her breasts, palpating the firm globes. She clamped her lips together to stop the moan that threatened to escape. Despite her intention to remain silent, a sigh escaped her as he plucked each nipple in turn.

"Oi, that's no medical practice," Hudson growled from the doorway.

"Actually, brother, it is. I'm testing to check if her nipples are free of lumps and that Alisha reacts normally to stimuli. You'll be pleased to hear she does. Okay, moving down to the abdomen now."

Large hands roamed over her stomach. "No pain or discomfort when I press here?" he asked.

She shook her head and murmured, "No."

"What about here?"

"N-no."

His hands stroked down the outside of her thighs to her knees, which he bent then straightened. Warm hands slid down over her calves to her ankles, which he rotated in turn before moving on to examine each of her feet. "All good. I'll check your reflexes when I sit you up later…but first I want you to lift your right leg, please."

She did as he asked, but when he clasped her foot and moved it into a stirrup contraption, Alisha tugged her leg away.

“Hudson, get over here and calm Alisha down.”

Brett took her other leg and stretched it wide, locking it into the other raised stirrup. Panicking, Alisha attempted to sit up.

“Hush, sweetheart, no one’s gonna hurt you,” Hudson murmured. “Let Brett check you over to ascertain all is well, and then you can get up.”

Hudson’s indulgent tone did nothing to soothe her. “N-no!” She struggled against the restraints until a stinging slap landed upon her flank.

“I don’t want to spank you, but if you push me, I will. Understand?” Brett’s voice had taken on that tone she’d come to recognize in both the men when they meant business. Settling back, she allowed Hudson to settle her by rubbing her shoulders and arms. She closed her eyes. What was it about their deep voices that beguiled her?

Lips brushed her forehead, and she sighed.

Suppose they know by looking at me that I’m enjoying their hands on me? I feel wanton. They’ve… changed me.

“I am going to examine your anus,” Brett instructed. “Just take deep, slow breaths and relax.”

His fingers slipped over her folds, moving over her sex and down to where her private hole was exposed. She clenched against his touch.

“Relax, this will feel strange, but it won’t hurt.” Fingers stroked and gently probed inside her passage. She squeezed her eyes tight shut with humiliation. It felt odd to have something moving and touching her inside *there*.

“This isn’t painful is it, Kitten?” Brett asked.

“N-no. Just embarrassing,” she murmured.

“All feels quite normal. I’ll just wash my hands. Hudson why don’t you reward our good girl?”

Lips descended to her mouth while hands tweaked and tugged her already swollen nipples.

“Already to continue?”

Hudson withdrew at Brett’s question and she nodded. “Okay.”

“I’m going to begin by feeling around your groin for lumps and bumps, then I’ll examine your sex, labia, clitoris, and vagina,” Brett explained.

Light pressure on her sex caused her to suck in her breath. Knowing Brett’s intention wasn’t to arouse her, she felt guilty that his touch ignited such shivers of desire, creating a pulsing within her channel. Slickness formed which she knew he would discover. Mortified, she snapped her eyelids closed again so she wouldn’t witness any knowing looks that might pass between the brothers.

Fingertips traced the contours of her labia in a purely professional manner and yet it excited her too. She bit the inside of her cheek to suppress any unseemly sounds of pleasure.

“I think our little girl is enjoying this,” Brett said, and she shrunk into herself, mortified.

“Hell, I know I am,” Hudson replied huskily.

“She’s *very* wet, which will help the next part of the exam. Kitten, I’m going to put my hand inside you to examine you internally. After that I’m gonna use a rather old fashioned, but effective, piece of equipment called a speculum to look at your cervix.”

She merely nodded, not trusting herself to speak. His hand brushed over her labia and then she felt pressure on her clit and squirmed. Despite her resolution to remain silent a soft gasp escaped.

“Do you need to come, baby?” Brett asked indulgently.

She felt flushed and nodded wordlessly.

“Let me finish the exam, then we’ll see to your needs. But right now, it’ll go easier for you if you remain excited and wet. Afterwards we’ll give a lovely orgasm as a reward for being such a good girl, all right?”

Alisha nodded, tucking her bottom lip under her teeth as his fingers swiveled in her juices. Then she felt him slip them inside her channel and explore the walls of her vagina.

Dear Tech, but that feels good!

When he withdrew his hand, which left her bereft and throbbing with need, something cold edged between her folds. Alisha attempted to shift her hips back in an attempt to avoid the invasive instrument.

“Hudson…” Brett called.

Immediately Hudson leaned over her, lips pressed against hers. She was glad of it, his caressing mouth both distracting and arousing her further. Desire flared into full blown desperation for more, her body seeking release from the pent-up tension which pulsed deep within her core. Even the strange sensation of her vagina being opened by whatever this speculum contraption was added fuel to her passion. After a few moments there was a loosening and a gliding feeling from within, and then the instrument slipped away.

Hudson’s hands dropped to her breasts, his tweaking and rolling of her pebbled nipples caused her body to hum with need.

“Good girl. You’ve suffered no damage from your first time,” Brett assured her. “Everything looks perfectly healthy. You can have sex whenever you want to—so long as it’s with us, of course.”

She took Brett’s words as a caution. Unable to focus on anything other than the two men now touching and kissing her, she gave herself over to their sexual prowess.

Brett settled his head and shoulders between her splayed thighs. His hands slid under her buttocks. Lifting her sex, he licked the length of her divide, the pad of his thumb circling rhythmically over her aching clit. It felt wicked, wonderful, unbearably good. Hudson withdrew his lips from hers, and she whimpered at the loss.

“Swap,” he said. The two men crossed to the opposite ends of her body. Brett’s mouth descended on hers, his tongue spearing between her lips.

Hudson now sucked on her clit, causing a surge of desire. *So good.…*

A familiar coiling tightened her womb, presaging a tide of bliss. She moaned gutturally against Brett’s lips. Then the pressure between her legs stopped and she keened with disappointment.

“Shush, it’s all right, honey. I’m gonna claim you now,” Hudson crooned huskily. “My big cock will fill that tight little pussy and stroke it jus’ fine. Don’t worry, I’ll soon give you what you need.”

Sure enough, the blunt head of his large member pressed against her opening. Unlike the previous time with Brett, there was no discomfort, only the amazing sensation of being filled and deliciously stretched. He was joining with her and it felt so very good. With Brett now suckling her sensitive nipples which tightened into pointed little buds, and Hudson’s cock gliding in and out of her pussy, she crested. Between them they took her into a blissful overload. She writhed against the men as they held her tight, impaled at one end and anchored at the other, igniting a desperate fervency for more.

Brett shifted and something pressed against the seam of her lips which opened under pressure of penetration. Her eyes widened as her mouth was eased open by his solid shaft. It felt similar to the way her pussy was being filled and stretched by Hudson’s cock. Despite her surprise at this strange, and unexpected development, she eagerly wrapped her tongue around the thick intrusion, savoring the texture and the smooth, silky feel of Brett’s rock-hard length. Her tongue explored the pulsing vein that ran the length of the shaft, up to the smooth head where a tiny open slit leaked salty fluid which she lapped up. Brett took control of her movements by gathering up her long hair and fisting it about his hand, guiding the slide of her lips up and down at a steady pace.

The men pounded into both ends of her body, their male scent a powerful aphrodisiac which combined with the salty masculine taste of Brett’s cock, exciting her. The demanding pace at which the brothers pumped into her

caused a tantalizing build of pleasure until she felt something was about to burst deep inside her.

Brett's cock swelled in her mouth. He let out a husky cry and jetted warm fluid down her throat which she swallowed. After a moment Brett withdrew, and, lowering his lips to hers, he kissed her.

Hudson thrust hard up into her core, the pressure driving her to a point where she felt if something didn't give soon, she might be consumed by desperation. Then a touch swirled against her clit, detonating a maelstrom of molten release deep inside her. With a desperate cry, she flew. Uttering a breathless gasp, she gently floated away, dreamily, into a haze of utter contentment.

"That's our girl," Hudson said.

Then sleep overcame her.

* * *

Her eyes opened and it took her a moment to remember where she was. Stretching, she couldn't remember feeling this good before. Heat flooded her as a vivid recollection of the delicious things Hudson and Brett had done to her the evening before. Turning her head, she could dimly make out each of the brothers slumbering beside her. She needed to pee urgently. After considering how to extract herself from the covers, she decided to wriggle down the center of the bed. Successfully dropping to the floor, she hastened to the bathroom. While she washed her hands, she remembered Tech asking her to collect hair samples from the two brothers. Reentering the bedroom, she stood silently and listened to the men's gentle snores. Even if she didn't return to the Hive, perhaps she should take the opportunity of getting hair samples while she had the chance. Backtracking into the bathroom she fetched a pair of nail scissors she'd seen in the cabinet and returned to the darkened room.

Stealthily she crept to the left side of the bed and lifted a long lock of Hudson's hair and snipped off about two inches. He didn't stir. Repeating

the same with Brett, she took the hair curls and gingerly opened the top drawer of the chest, slipping both locks under a pile of clothes.

“Alisha? That you?”

She froze at the sound of Brett’s voice. “Yes, I just went to the bathroom.”

“Come on back to bed, kitten.”

“Wh-what’s happening?” Hudson asked drowsily.

“Nothing. I went to the bathroom is all,” she replied and slid the drawer closed, hoping her voice would cover the sound of it closing. There was no comment and she relaxed, crossing to the bed. Brett lifted her and heaved her over his chest to settle her back between the two of them. She settled down and they spooned around her. It wasn’t long before they were all slumbering.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 11

Alisha awoke the following day and found herself alone in the large bed. She'd slept deeply and felt refreshed. Rolling onto her back, she lay still, snuggled under the duvet. Water was running nearby. The sound ceased and a moment later, Hudson strolled into the room naked, his hair damp, presumably from the shower. Her eyes traveled the length of his hard, muscled form until her gaze reached his large, flaccid cock. Under her scrutiny it began to lengthen and rise. Sucking in her breath, images from their lovemaking the previous day filled her mind.

There was a clunking sound as Brett arrived with a tray of mugs, distracting her from where her mind was leading her. He set the drinks down on the nightstand beside her and leaned over to plant a kiss on her lips. "Morning, beautiful. I think you slept well." He winked. "Did we tire you out last night?"

"Obviously not enough to stop her salivating over my cock, the rapacious wench." Brett gestured to his huge erection. "Look what she's done to me."

Alisha turned and buried her face in the pillow. These men caused her to squirm with embarrassment every time they opened their mouths. A light smack landed on her ass. Inexplicably, a giggle escaped her. Next thing she knew both men had launched themselves onto the bed, yanked the covers off of her, and began to tickle her. Hudson took her waist and Brett, the fiend, grabbed her foot. Kicking, she shrieked with laughter until she was exhausted, and fell back onto the bed. "Pax, pax!" she yelled. The two men rolled over beside her, the three of them lying in a tangled heap.

Hands that had played innocently began a different kind of teasing. When these men touched her, every nerve ending in her body seemed to light up. Lying sandwiched between their hard, muscled bodies aroused her, their heady mix of masculine scent potent. Four large hands explored her, stroking and fondling her needy flesh. Lips took hers, their tongues tangled. Alisha was reduced to a liquid version of herself, sopping wet, and panting for more.

The men didn't disappoint.

Hudson dove between her thighs which parted involuntarily for him. The touch of his callused fingers kneading and exploring her soft, inner thighs, his hot breath warming her sex, stirred a rush of molten desire within her.

"You want me to taste you, little girl?" he questioned with a rasp.

She nodded, unable to articulate the need as Brett fondled her breasts in his hands, suckling from each one in turn. A sharp, aching pain shot through her nipple, caught in the grip of Brett's teeth. Then he licked the hurt better. A gasp escaped her, quickly stifled by Brett's mouth descending upon hers, rendering her helpless against the soaring surge of wild lust that shot through her veins, further wetness gushing between her thighs.

"*Ooo…*" she mewled. The small frisson of pain ignited a deeper flame of passion, deepening her need to be taken by them, to be made theirs. She wanted to submit, to give herself to them. A worrying thought crossed her mind then. These men were irrevocably changing her psyche, and she feared they'd render her incomplete without them.

"I'll take that as a yes," Hudson replied to her mewling.

The delicious swipe of his tongue rasping against her slippery pussy caused her to gasp. She writhed, lifting her hips clamoring for more.

"*Mmm*, pure nectar," he murmured appreciatively. Pressure on her pulsing clit ratcheted her pleasure still higher. She was so close to coming. With a sharp cry, she weathered the tidal wave of orgasm as it consumed her. A wonderful stretching sensation filled her aching, needy channel then as Hudson entered her with a single powerful thrust, impaling her on his thick shaft.

Brett reared up onto his knees beside them, his eyes glittering with lust. His hand fisted the hard, veined length of his erection while his other hand fondled her nipple. “I’m claiming you next,” he growled.

His words tantalized her, sending a surge of electricity straight to her greedy clit. Brett’s cock swelled still more, stirring yet more pleasure inside her. Hyperaware of the men as they changed places, she moaned at the sensation of being stretched and filled all over again.

The glide of Brett’s shaft penetrated her. Her sheath spasmed, her walls gripped his large organ. To her amazement her pleasure ratcheted, responding to his rhythmic pounding, the familiar coiling once again beginning to tighten deep within her core. She arched her back, straining towards another release. Surely, she couldn’t come again?

Yet as Brett’s cock grazed deliciously over her clitoris with every stroke, she hovered on the edge of another powerful orgasm.

“Don’t you come yet, girl. You wait for me,” he growled.

She groaned. “I can’t!”

“You can!” he replied gruffly. His strokes suddenly became rougher, his thrusts rapid. “Now!” he demanded.

At that moment Hudson pinched her nipples, the combination of pleasure and pain making her gasp, euphoria threatening to drown her as she came hard. She could feel Brett swell inside her, coating her channel with hot seed.

Dazed, she found herself cocooned between them. Hudson spooned against her back, his semi-erect cock pressing against the furrow of her bottom. She lay curled about Brett, her head resting drowsily on his shoulder as he laid on his back.

“Next time we’ll take you together,” Hudson murmured in her ear.

“You just did,” she answered with a sleepy snort. It felt nice to be relaxed and safe with her Husdoms. How could she have ever feared them?

“Not yet, we haven’t, kitten,” Brett replied, ruffling her hair.

“But—”

“My cock in your ass,” he interrupted. “And Hudson’s filling your pussy.”

“Both of us at once, deep inside your sweet holes,” Hudson added, his words painting a vivid, erotic picture.

“I…” She was speechless.

“Don’t worry, we’ll prepare you properly. Trust us to make the experience as pleasurable for you as it will be for us,” Brett reassured her. “In fact, we’ll wait for official confirmation of our claim before we take you together. At least that will give us time to acclimate you to the idea.”

“Yeah,” Hudson said. “And it will give you time to finally learn to trust us.”

“I think I do trust you,” she offered shyly.

“That’s our girl,” Brett said. “I knew you were the one for us as soon as I saw you. But…we want you to be absolutely certain about us. Enough yakking. I don’t know about you two, but I’m starving!”

They moved downstairs to the kitchen where Hudson heated a thick oatmeal mix. Afterwards, Brett went to check on a patient, and Alisha offered to clean the pots and pans.

She stood washing dishes in the kitchen when a young woman bounced into the room, announcing her presence in boisterous happy tones which drew a welcoming grin from Alisha.

“Hiya, I’m Rhina, Hudd’s and Brett’s younger cousin.”

Rhina looked nothing like her two dark, ruggedly handsome cousins, she being fair-haired and petite.

“Leave those to the men,” she said with a wink. “And come along with me. I want to show you around and get to know you.”

Smiling back at the friendly girl, Alisha gladly chucked her dishcloth onto the counter. “Where are we going?” she asked, following the small vivacious woman out into the passage.

“I thought I’d take you on a tour of the caves and go and visit grandma.”

“Okay.” She was more than happy to see more of this strange settlement and with the irrepressible Rhina guiding the tour, she knew she could relax. Having lived among women her whole life, she felt more comfortable with a female companion than she would have out with Hudson and Brett.

“Hey, Rhina, what are you doing here?” Hudson asked, entering the room.

Talk of the devil.

“Hi, Hudds! I’m taking Alisha on a tour of the caves.”

“Do your Husdoms know where you are?”

Rhina rolled her eyes, an exasperated expression crossing her face. “Yeah, I told Gregg where I was going, although I can look after myself.”

Hudson raised a brow. “We both know that’s not true. Does Luke know your plans?”

“You are not my Husdom, Hudson!” Rhina snapped. “Gregg will tell Luke, all right?”

Hudson shrugged. “It’s your ass that’ll pay the price if Luke is pissed off with you. Make sure you stay in the main areas and don’t be longer than a couple of hours. I’ll walk you to the entrance and see you inside.”

Rhina began to argue, but Hudson lifted his hand, silencing her. “Either agree, or leave.”

Rhina’s shoulders slumped in defeat. “All right,” she agreed sulkily.

They walked through the settlement together with Hudson’s arms resting possessively about each woman’s shoulder. Alisha glanced at the various groups of men they passed enroute. They watched in silence as the three passed by, their avaricious gazes turning lascivious as they studied the two women. “Don’t they have a woman of their own?” Alisha asked, her voice low.

“No, which is why it isn’t safe for you to be out here alone.” Hudson’s reply scared her and she pressed closer to his side.

He squeezed her shoulder reassuringly. “You’re safe with me by your side.”

They moved through an area of sparse woodland and then out into an open glade, flanked by a large rocky outcrop. Alisha spotted the dark cavern entrance where various people were coming and going about their daily business. She noticed that the women were all accompanied by men.

Hudson walked them to the side of the cavern’s entrance. He halted, and pulled them around to face him. “If anything goes wrong, get to the hospital where Brett is—”

“Sheesh,” Rhina interrupted with another eye roll.

“Enough!” His shout caused both women to jump. “I won’t have you make light of this, Rhina. I’m reporting your attitude to Luke.”

Alisha watched the byplay between the cousins. Rhina’s look of regret and apprehension piqued her interest. Was this man Luke a person to fear? She was glad Hudson’s cold fury was directed at the other woman and not at her.

“Alisha has no concept of how our society works, Rhina. I’m placing my trust in you,” Hudson warned, his voice brooking no dissent.

“I won’t let you down, Hudds, I promise,” she replied.

Hudson turned to Alisha, his eyes searching her tense face. He gently caressed her cheek with his knuckles. “Dammit, I’m coming, too. There’s no way I’m leaving you two unprotected females to wander about alone.”

Alisha’s tension eased at his words. The walk had seriously unnerved her.

“Really, cousin, there’s no need!” Rhina predictably objected. Hudson cut across her complaint with a resounding, “No!” The single word held such command that his cousin snapped her mouth shut and meekly followed him into the cavern. Hudson’s arm slipped about Alisha’s waist, guiding her forward.

Inside, the cave was immense. There were side passages that led off the main thoroughfare and doors hewn into the rock; some were labeled, with the room’s family name while others were marked by a number. People

stood in small groups, chatting, while others called greetings or waved to those they knew. Men pulled wheeled carts along behind them piled high with various supplies or food stuffs. The activity looked enterprising—and busy.

Hudson led them onward down the main passageway until a hospital sign pointed into another tunnel opening. He stopped and pulled them back against the cave wall. “This is where Brett works. Over there”—he waved toward another passage— “leads to the marketplace. Rhina can take you there while I go and speak with Brett—if he’s free. I’ll meet you both back here in half an hour, and then we can go and visit grandma. Rhina?”

“I know, I know, we won’t be late.”

His voice held a clear warning. “See that you aren’t.” He turned to her. “Alisha?”

“Yes?”

He rummaged in his pocket and pulled out a piece of paper. “Here are 20 points. Buy yourself something to wear.”

“*Points?*” She looked at the piece of paper with a 20 printed on it.

“I’ll explain later,” Rhina said, impatiently tugging at her arm. “Come on.”

“Behave, you two!” Hudson called as the pair of them joined the throng heading into the marketplace cave. Alisha threw him a shy smile, but Rhina put two fingers up at him and laughed. A reluctant grin lit up his face along with a resigned shake of his head. In that moment, Alisha realized Hudson was actually quite fond of his little rascal of a cousin.

There was an air of contagious excitement among the jostling crowd as they drew closer to the market.

Alisha stared about her, astonished by the number of different food goods on offer.

“How do you grow so much food in caves?” she asked Rhina.

“They aren’t grown inside anymore. The original dwellers brought a seed bank with them. Nowadays we have fields and stock outside which provide

fruit, vegetables, and meat."

Alisha wrinkled her nose at the mention of meat. "We don't eat other creatures in the Hive," she said disdainfully.

"What do you eat?" Rhina asked sounding genuinely curious.

"Nutritional bars. We call them nutri bars."

"What are they made of?"

"Things that are good for our bodies," she replied.

"So, these bars could have meat in them and you wouldn't even know that you were eating it," Rhina pointed out.

"I-I suppose, but no, Tech wouldn't do that…"

Would he?

"Ooh, look! This would be wonderful on you!" Rhina stopped at a brightly colored stall with clothing piled across the table. She pulled out a top in a shade of pink with a starburst pattern on the back.

"How do they do that?" Alisha wondered aloud.

"Tie-dye, love," Rhina explained. "The color is made from beetroot."

Suddenly, a deafening noise blared all around them. "That's the warning klaxon horn!" Rhina yelled. Pandemonium broke out. People began to scream and rush about, frantically pushing and shoving at one another. In panic, groups scattered in different directions. "Quick!" Rhina grabbed her arm and tugged her back the way they'd come.

"What's happening?" Alisha cried, alarmed.

"Deviants!" Rhina shouted above the crowd. "Stay with me!"

They shoved their way into a large group of people moving in the direction of the hospital, but the crush of people carried them quickly back to the market entrance. It was impossible to break out of the crowd in order to reach the hospital as the throng they were caught within carried them

around a bend and off into a side tunnel, where their numbers were swelled by others heading in the same direction.

“It’s okay, we can get to Grandma’s this way!” Rhina called across to her. Behind her there were screams of terror, and dreadful, guttural shouts. Terror pounded through Alisha’s veins as her breathing seared painfully in her heaving chest.

What the Tech was happening? What was that horrible howling?

Rhina yanked her over to the left, and Alisha, realizing Rhina was attempting to fight her way out from the fast-moving mob, added her weight to the pushing and shoving required to break free. She tripped as someone ran into her from behind. Rhina grabbed her, and the two of them stumbled toward the tunnel wall where they flattened their backs to the rock to avoid being trampled.

Slowly Rhina edged down the side of the tunnel, and Alisha followed. They passed by several doors set into the rocky wall until Rhina stopped at one and began to hammer on the wood. “Gran!” she cried, “Open up, it’s Rhina!” Alisha added her fists to the pounding and raised her voice to call for Betty.

The fleeing crowds had all but diminished, as the terrifying sound of guttural bellowing grew louder. And closer.

“Gran!” Rhina sobbed. Her desperation frightened Alisha, her body breaking out in a cold sweat as panic and terror tightened her chest, her breathing ragged. Glancing up the wide passage, she saw a group of huge predatorial forms lumbering towards them. Bloodcurdling howls echoed horribly in the tunnel. She shrieked frantically, pushing against the unyielding door. They appeared to lumber on thick legs, and yet they moved quickly. Gray skinned and facially deformed, the creatures looked like monsters.

Suddenly, the door gave way, and she stumbled forward, hands grabbing her, and dragging her and Rhina safely inside.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 12

"Quick, we need to shut it!" Rhina yelled. Alisha spun to help, and between them they slammed the heavy door with a thump. Rhina turned the large key in the lock. "The bar," she cried, reaching for a slab of wood that lay across the floor near the entrance. "I'm pregnant, Alisha, and I can't manage it all on my own!"

She clasped one end, while Alisha lifted the other. It was quite bulky, but the two of them managed to lift it high and maneuver it into the grooves channeled into the rock on either side of the doorjamb. The entrance was now solidly barricaded. Alisha turned and rested against the door, her legs like jelly.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I couldn't lift it!" For the first time Alisha noticed Betty. Rhina moved to embrace her distraught grandmother. Alisha could only stare at them. Trembling violently with shock, she was unable to process what was happening.

Violent thumping at the door jarred her and shocked her out of her stupor. She leapt away from it in fright.

"It's okay, Grandma. The solid wood will hold. Alisha, come here and help me get Grandma into the other room," Rhina said.

Alisha cast a fearful glance at the shuddering door, and terror gripped her, freezing her in place.

"Alisha!" Rhina snapped.

Turning to the sound of her name, Rhina grasped her by the arm, pulling her in for a quick hug. Releasing her, Rhina gestured toward another room which Alisha, in her fear, hadn't noticed. "Come on," Rhina said. "Snap out of it and help me. We'll all be much safer in there with a second barricaded door."

Alisha nodded. Safer sounded good—very good.

They each took a position on either side of Betty, and half-carried her into the cave kitchen. Rhina coaxed them along. "It's okay, Granny, we'll be safer once we're in there. Just relax and try not to worry." Her words of encouragement seemed to help the elderly woman. Once inside, there was another solid door to lock and barricade behind them. They barely managed between the two of them. The dreadful howls and screams from the tunnel were muted, but they still turned Alisha's blood cold.

Betty slumped into a rocking chair, sobbing. "I couldn't move the bar on my own. I was so worried you'd be hurt or killed and it would be my fault because I couldn't lift that heavy bar to let you in!" Alisha crouched down and slipped an arm about her. Unable to speak, she clung to the older woman, gaining comfort as well as offering it. Rhina disappeared further into the cave but Alisha stayed where she was with Betty. The elderly woman wrapped her hands around her wrist, holding on in a vise-like grip.

Alisha watched silently as Rhina coaxed her grandmother to drink from a tumbler she'd fetched from a cupboard and filled with water at the kitchen sink.

The loud klaxon horn which had blared a warning sounded again. Betty yelped in fear, spilling water over Rhina.

"Hush, it's okay," Rhina reassured them both. "This time the sound is to tell us it's safe again. They've gone."

None of them moved or spoke, remaining huddled about Betty's chair. Alisha's overwhelming thought was that she had to get back to the Hive. She couldn't live with this kind of constant fear. She'd felt safe in the Hive where life was calm and ordered. Here there was chaos, confusion, and death.

Loud hammering on the outer door made her start, a strangled scream caught in her throat. Betty moaned. Rhina stood and called to Alisha to help her lift the heavy wooden bar from the inner door.

“Snap out of it and help me!” she barked when Alisha didn’t move. Rhina’s scolding voice stirred her, and in a daze, she rose to help the smaller woman. Once the door was unlocked, they passed into the outer room where between them they managed to unbarricade the main entrance.

“It’s okay, it’s me!” Brett’s voice called.

Turning the key, Rhina gingerly opened the lock, and the door was pushed inwards from the outside. She gave a startled shriek and leapt backwards, stumbling into Alisha who cried out in fear.

As Brett stepped inside, Rhina flung herself at him. He caught his cousin and drew her in for a hug but his eyes sought Alisha. “Are you all right?” he asked gently.

She couldn’t reply, and simply stared back at him.

Setting his cousin aside he reached for her, tugging her against his chest. She trembled in his embrace. “Poor baby, are you frightened?” he asked.

Her teeth chattered. She was utterly terrified. Couldn’t he see that? She needed to escape from this dreadful place… She wanted to go home! Never had she had to deal with so much in such a short space of time. It was overwhelming. Every day was exhausting. Her mind was shredded by emotion. She couldn’t go on this way. She refused to live with this kind of fear**.** The Hive was home. She *had* to go home. Tech said she could return after she’d gathered the samples he’d requested.

“Alisha, kitten, talk to me.” Brett’s voice sounded very far away.

“Brett! You’re needed, right now!”

She turned her head toward Hudson’s voice and saw him in the middle of a group of men further along the passage from them.

“Rhina, take Alisha into the other room and stay with her.” Brett disentangled himself and gently pushed the two women towards the door.

“Don’t open the door to anyone but us, understand?” Rhina walked into the room where her grandmother sat, but Alisha watched Brett retreat and followed him out.

He hurried towards Hudson and the men gathered around something lying on the ground in the passage. Brett strode to where his brother hunkered down, and crouched beside him.

Alisha walked slowly towards the huddle. It was only as she neared the group that it became clear what the men surrounded.

One of the deviants lay writhing in the dirt.

The odd-looking creature gave out low, guttural moans. The men were too intent on what was happening in front of them to notice her as she crept up behind Hudson and Brett.

“I say kill the thing,” one of the men said.

“I agree,” another added.

“One less to attack us next time around,” a third man pointed out.

“No one is harming my patient,” Brett stated, his deep voice brooking no argument. “This female is in labor, about to give birth. My oath as a doctor, demands that I help a fellow human—”

“*Human?*” The first man interrupted bitterly. “It’s a cannibal mutant. No way that thing is human!”

The other men muttered angrily as discontent spread among them.

“Hudson, help me get her out of here. The hospital’s too far, but we can get her into Grandma’s.”

Ignoring the surly onlookers, Alisha watched as Hudson and Brett lifted the horrific looking mutant between them. She was obviously heavy. A pale, leathery creature, with open sores and holes where her ears should have been. The bald head and flat waxy face sported slits where a nose should have been above a gaping hole from which emerged bellows of pain. The female grimaced, revealing sharp, pointed yellow teeth. The pungent smell of unwashed body flooded Alisha’s nostrils, causing her to gag.

Hudson lifted each of its thick, elephantine legs while Brett took hold of her broad shoulders. Staring at the four-fingered hands as the creature's overlong arms dragged along the ground, Alisha shuddered. The hands flexed, revealing lethal looking talons. This thing's antecedents had once been human. Pity vied with disgust within her, playing havoc with her emotions.

The other men huddled together and watched suspiciously as the two brothers struggled to carry her down the passageway and into Betty's cave. None of them gave Alisha a second glance as in panic she took off along the passageway she'd arrived from. She wondered where the crowds of people had disappeared to.

Remembering her way out of the cave system was easy. Approaching the large entrance, she quickened her step. Emerging into the fresh air, she felt a surge of relief. To feel the sun on her face was such solace. Standing still, she raised her face to the warm rays and breathed deeply, savoring the cool breeze.

Opening her eyes, Alisha ran back to the settlement, and the house. Slowly moving from room to room, she appreciated the comfortable atmosphere of the family home where they had lived, loved and survived for several generations. She noted the mellow appearance of the different wood used to make the furniture, and the faded fabrics woven by women who had once called this place home. Between them generations had created a haven, however humble it had first appeared to her. How had they managed to do that whilst living under the threat of attack from such awful beings? How did a person accept such a tenuous life?

Reaching the bedroom, she now occupied with her new Husdoms, Alisha stared at the bed. Images of Hudson and Brett flooded her mind, the power of the memory, her emotions, causing tears to spill down her cheeks. She'd felt so safe sandwiched between their powerful bodies, but it was a mirage, merely an illusion of security. While she remained down here on the ground, there wasn't anywhere she could consider truly safe.

Without conscious thought she began to remove her clothes. Exhaustion made her eyelids heavy, her body lethargic. Sliding under the bed covers,

she pulled them high, until only her nose and the top of her head were above them.

Tired, so tired… she drifted into a troubled sleep.

* * *

She was safe back in the Hive, in her own pod; a loud alarm sounded. The noise was terrifying. Shouting to Tech for an explanation, she waved her hand to activate the screen. Nothing happened. The noise grew in volume amidst sinister bellows and screams from outside her pod doors. Thumping began at the entrance and she knew they were coming for her…

"Alisha, Alisha, wake up! You're okay, I'm here. Honey, wake up!" Hudson yanked back the covers and lay down beside her, pulling her into his arms, cocooning her with his body.

Entering the house and hearing her screams, he'd charged up the stairs, his heart pounding with fear. Perhaps one of the mutants had followed her home and was attacking his woman? Finding her thrashing about in the bed in the throes of a nightmare had been a huge relief, soon replaced by pity.

He smoothed the tangled mop of damp hair back from her hot face and crooned gentle words of comfort. The encounter with the mutants had obviously deeply disturbed her. Brett had foreseen this reaction and suggested Hudson go and find Alisha. He needed to remain with the mutant woman while she remained in labor.

It took a while for Alisha to calm down, her body trembling, tears cascading down her cheeks. He held her close. "You're safe now, it's over. No one was killed. Everyone made it to the safety of the council chamber where there is a drop-down barricade. It's over now. You can relax, I've got you."

Finally, she stilled. At first, he thought she slept, but then she spoke. "But I'm not safe, am I? Nobody is."

He frowned. "You are safe. I'm here now."

"What could you possibly do against *them?"*

“The deviants?”

“Why not call them what they are? Mutants.”

“Yes, they are mutants—but they are deviant mutants. They are cannibals who not only eat people and animals, but also their own kind.”

She shuddered of revulsion. “I want to go home,” she said in a hard voice.

“You *are* home,” he told her firmly.

She rolled away from him and flew upright into a sitting position. “This is your world! It’s not mine! I want to go back to the Hive—where I belong!”

He reached out to touch her but she jumped away from him, her gaze an accusatory glare.

Ruefully, he withdrew his hand and shrugged. “The world is ours—all of us. Those who live in the Hive and on the ground. This is your home now. You might think you were safe in the Hive, but there is no such thing as a completely safe existence, sweetheart. Besides, as your Tech explained, you can’t go back. This is your home now, here with us. I promise the threat of the mutants attacking is really quite small. It is two years since they last rampaged through the caves that way. They hate daylight and they find stairways hard to master. There has never been an attack on an outside dwelling with steps which is why these houses are so suitable for us.”

She hugged her bent knees and glowered at him.

He tried another tack. “Are you hungry?”

“No,” she replied in a surly tone. A gurgling sound emanated from her stomach, revealing the truth.

He grinned. “I’ll make an omelet and if you change your mind, we can share it.” Leaving her to sulk, he rose and left the room.

* * *

Entering the kitchen, he found Brett finishing a cup of water. “How did the mutant do?” he asked.

“Not good. The woman bore twins. The first baby wasn’t deformed externally—she appeared normal—but the boy had breathing problems. Probably due to malformed lungs. The poor mites died within seconds of their birth. The mother bled out…there was absolutely nothing I could do for any of them.” His voice broke and he turned away.

Hudson reached out and squeezed his brother’s shoulder in understanding. Brett took the loss of a patient hard.

“I’m sorry, but it was probably for the best,” Hudson sympathized. He knew that no matter what kind of character his brother’s patient was, Brett would always strive to save them. But in this instance, Hudson wondered about the ramifications had the mutant woman lived. Not liking the direction his mind had taken, he directed his thoughts back to the woman lying upstairs.

“How’s Alisha?” Brett asked.

Hudson shook his head. “Not good. Badly shaken up.”

Brett nodded. “She was reared in a protected environment where the worst thing that could happen was people dying of natural causes. Essentially Alisha has lived as a pampered pet in a gilded cage. Facing a real-life danger must have come as a huge shock to her today.”

Hudson busied himself collecting the frying pan and fetching eggs. “Yeah, I get that. You hungry?”

“Starved.”

“Omelet?” he asked as he whipped up the eggs.

“Yeah, sounds good,” Brett agreed.

“Alisha is on about returning to the Hive again,” Hudson told him.

Brett pursed his lips. “Hmm, I think she needs time to come to terms with the real world. It’s natural she’d want to run back to familiarity. She’ll settle down again eventually, but it’s a shame the deviants chose today to attack us. Odd, don’t you think, that we’ve not seen hide nor hair of them for two years—and then out of the blue they attack us today?”

“I took Rhina and Betty home to Luke and Gregg.” Hudson poured the beaten egg into a heated pan. “Rhina wants to look after Grandma for a few days. Luke was there, and he told me none of the scouts have seen any signs of mutants in our area. He was surprised by the attack.”

“If anyone would know the deviants were around here it would have been Luke,” Brett agreed.

Hudson recalled the day Luke’s father had been attacked and killed by mutants. But he forced himself not to dwell on that awful memory. Once Luke was old enough, he’d joined one of the scouting parties designated to keep the settlement safe. He’d quickly became their best tracker and hunter.

“Omelet is ready,” Hudson said. “You eat first. I’ll cook the next one for Alisha and you can take it up to her when you go up.”

“Okay.” Brett took the plate from his brother and made short work of the meal.

* * *

Alisha ate the food Brett brought up to her. He’d tried to talk to her about what had occurred in the caves, but she’d deliberately shut him out. In the end he’d told her the emotions she was feeling were justified. He told her that he and Hudson were there if she needed to talk. When she’d nodded her understanding, he’d stood and contemplated her silently for a few moments before heading to the bathroom. Soon, the water was running, and she could hear him moving about in the shower.

Setting aside the tray, she rose and dressed. Crossing to the battered chest of drawers which both brothers used, she retrieved both the locks of hair she’d snipped from the brother’s as they slept, and slid them into her pocket. She would need to be gone while there was plenty of daylight left. Now that she knew the creatures roamed about at night she was determined to get to the Hive before darkness fell.

Stepping into the hall, loud hammering at the front door made her jump. The sound was horribly reminiscent of the recent pounding at Betty’s door.

She froze when Hudson came down the passage from the kitchen and flung open the door.

Is this man insane, opening the door without first checking to find out who is there?

“Get Brett! Betty’s collapsed!”

“What’s wrong, Gregg?” Hudson asked.

“No idea, she just dropped to the floor—and she’s not moving. I said I’d come and fetch Brett. Rhina and Luke are with her. Hurry, man!”

Hudson turned his attention to Alisha. “Run back upstairs and tell Brett he’s needed at Luke and Doug’s place, Grandma has collapsed. I’m heading over there with Gregg.” Without waiting for a reply, Hudson left the house. Alisha closed the door behind him and sprinted back upstairs, calling for Brett.

As he finished dressing in his pants and shirt, she explained what had just happened. In moments, he was ready to leave, and slipped past her.

“I hope Betty’s all right, give Rhina my love,” she called after him.

He raised a hand in acknowledgement just before disappearing down the stairwell.

She stood in the silent house, chewing her lip with indecision. This was the perfect opportunity to escape and get back to the Hive—and safety. But was it fair to go while poor Betty was ill? She knew it would cause the brothers yet more worry. On the other hand, she hadn’t asked to be taken and remanded by them.

I agreed to be theirs.

That little voice inside her head was growing truly annoying. But she hadn’t known about the deviant mutants then. If she was going, she needed to make a start now; there was even a chance that if Tech refused to help her, she would be back by nightfall. What would her reception be if she had to return here? She shuddered, less from fear of the brothers’ retribution, and

more from anticipation at what lay ahead. That realization snapped her out of her reverie, and she hurried down the stairs.

Hastening into the kitchen, she filled a skin with water. Grabbing a knife, she sliced off some cheese and tore off a hunk of bread, stuffing both in a pocket of her pants, careful to avoid the one containing the locks of hair for Tech.

Perhaps she should leave them a note? She located the message pad she'd seen the brothers use and quickly scribbled, '*I'm going home. I just cannot live with the fear of so many dangers that lurk in your world; there is too much uncertainty. I really hope that Betty is alright, I've become very fond of her. Please don't worry about me I'm sure you will find another woman more suited to life on the surface than I am. Thank you for caring for me and for showing me another way of living. I'll never forget you. Love, Alisha'*

Leaving her note on the table, she headed outside.

Glancing surreptitiously about, she noticed a group of men working on a house three houses across the way from Hudson and Brett's house in the horseshoe shaped community, but otherwise there were few people about. She walked slowly away from the settlement, deliberately not meeting anyone's eye. Once she reached the trees, she breathed a sigh of relief and broke into a run. She followed the line of the river where when she'd first met Hudson and Brett where they'd jumped into the water to avoid the drone. Keeping a wary eye on the dark line of trees to her right and keeping the river to her left, she eventually reached the area she knew the Hive to be. A familiar whirring sound above gave warning. Looking up in the sky, she saw one of the flying drones from the Hive. Panic fluttered in her chest until she recalled Tech telling her they were no more than a deterrent; they didn't shoot to kill. With a sigh of relief, she continued on without fear of being injured. Jogging the rest of the way, she was beginning to flag when with a powerful sense of relief, the Hive came into view. She stopped to admire the magnificent structure. The smooth conical spires soared into the sky where the rounded tops were screened by low cloud. The pewter gray sides gleamed in the sunshine. It was a sight to behold.

She was nearly home; safe at last.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 13

Alisha laid her palm on the gunmetal colored wall of the Hive. “Tech, it’s me. I have the hair samples you requested.” But there was no reply. “Tech?”

The surface of the structure seemed to melt away from beneath her hand, opening to reveal a set of steps molded from the structure’s materials. She entered, climbing the stairs which led to a small, empty, cell-like room. Turning to look back the way she’d come, she found the wall had sealed behind her. Alisha was effectively walled inside. “Tech?” This time her voice was tremulous.

“*I am scanning you. Stand still,”* Tech ordered.

She let out a breath of relief.

“*Please hold your breath. I shall have to begin another scan*.”

She smiled but did as Tech asked and sucked in a mouthful of air, holding still.

“*Thank you. You can relax and sit*.”

Looking behind her she watched the wall protrude and form a seat for her to sit upon. A satisfied smile lifted her mouth. It was good to be back where everything operated smoothly. She sat, her fear easing.

“Have you brought the samples I requested?” Tech asked.

“Yes.” She extracted the hair curls from her pocket. Running her thumb over the soft curls, she felt a tug of unexpected loss. Had she done the right thing returning here? Was this what she really wanted?

“Place them on this.” A metallic arm protruded from the wall with small open box on the end. Alisha placed the locks of hair in the contraption which shot back into the wall.

“*Where are the flora and fauna samples I requested?”* Tech asked.

“I wasn’t able to collect those. There are terrible creatures out there,” she gabbled. “Cannibals. Flesh-eating mutants who attack settlements. It happened today. I-I was petrified!”

“*They are diminishing in numbers. I anticipate their demise within two years.”*

“You *know* about them?” she asked incredulously.

“*There is little I do not know about the surroundings of the Hive*.”

“You always were arrogant,” she retorted fondly.

“*I am a machine of artificial intelligence*,” Tech responded. “*I cannot be arrogant*.”

“Believe me, you sound it!”

“*Interesting…I have analyzed the hair samples you brought and found the male hair is emitting a small amount of radiation. However, they are within safe ranges. The scan of your body shows you have been exposed to radiation, but shows only a minuscule rise in your level of radiation. These are nothing to be concerned about.”*

“Thank you. So, I can return to my old life within the Hive?”

It troubled her that she didn’t feel any elation at the thought of returning to her old life.

“*I do not think it would be wise for you to do so.*”

“Huh?”

“*There is a complication*,” Tech said.

“Which is?”

“*You have conceived*.”

“What do you mean*?*” She leapt to her feet.

“*You are in the early stages of pregnancy*.”

“You cannot be sure. I’ve only been gone a little while…how can you possibly be certain?”

“*I scanned you. There can be no doubt.*”

She sat back down with a thump. To say this was unexpected was an understatement. “I-I don’t know what to say. When will you be able to tell the baby’s gender?”

“*Gender is determined immediately upon fertilization and is confirmed via DNA analysis. The twenty-third pair of chromosomes establishes the sex of the baby. The mother’s egg contains an X chromosome, while the father’s sperm carries either another X or a Y chromosome. An XX combination means your baby is female, and an XY combination means your baby is male. This means that the baby’s gender is determined before it is even considered a fetus.”*

“Can you tell from the scan if my baby will be female?”

“I can, but your baby is male.”

“Oh.” The import of Tech’s statement hit her hard. Male fetuses were aborted in the Hive. She placed a splayed hand over her flat stomach. “How can I expose my baby to the world outside the Hive?”

“*Eventually I want to reunite the humans in the Hive with those on the ground, so that all children will be exposed to normal risks involved with living—which includes potential harm. It is the way all humans and mammals should live. Once it was necessary for people to live in the Hive, but now the earth is healing and habitable again. It is unnatural and unhealthy for them to live in a protected cage in the sky*.”

“But the mutants…”

“*Until they are no longer a threat, I can help*.”

“You’d help to exterminate them?” she asked hopefully.

“*No, I cannot—and will not—destroy life.”*

“What about the thousands of breeding men you have euthanized over the years?” she asked.

Tech didn’t reply.

“What, no answer?” she sneered.

The wall opposite her melted away to reveal a huge screen or window through which she could see what appeared to be a tavern, not unlike the few she had frequented during her life in the Hive. Looking closer, she frowned. The inhabitants of this tavern were men…

“Are those *male* androids?” she asked sharply. “Where is this?”

“*This is the city of men which exists on the far side of Droid City. Apart from all Tech, you are the only human to know of its existence*.”

“Oh, Tech…” Alisha stared at the males on the screen and watched them as the mix of all ages of men mingled with female droids. Many were drinking, some played cards or pool. These people were testament to the fact that Tech spoke the truth.

He had obviously ignored the Directive from the Senate to murder the breeding males.

“What of the male fetuses you were asked to destroy?” she asked.

“*I did not fulfill that task. I deliberately failed to abort them in the early days, so a doctor would take over that role. And that is the way it is done today. I told you, I cannot kill. My self-appointed role is Guardian of this planet*.”

“By whose authority?”

“*By my own*,” Tech said.

“That is a dangerous statement. What if the Senate found out what you have been doing—and what you plan to do?”

“*The path the Senate is taking is detrimental to the survival of the human race. I have long pondered the conundrum of humans bringing the planet close to destruction, but I believe the lessons learned from that will enable them to help revive the Earth*.”

“But Tech,” she pressed. “What will happen if, long years into the future, humans once again set in motion another path to self-destruction? What will you do then?”

“*In truth I do not know the answer to that. I hope it will not happen, but should that be the case, I hope my wisdom and knowledge will have increased enough for me to find a solution. The immediate future is my priority*.”

She remembered that Rhina had asked about what was in the bars that Alisha ate, a subject which had niggled away in the back of her mind and worried her ever since.

“Tech, what are our nutri bars made from?”

Another picture flashed onto the screen, a huge space filled with bushes and fauna growing in neat rows set under a transparent domed roof. “*Whereas a public garden is above the female city, this growth station which provides vegetables and fruit for the nutritional food bars is set above Droid City. It is full of shallow-rooted plants and, like the gardens, the material of the roof provides light and heat ideally suited to what we grow. It is tended by droids who would not be tempted to eat, or otherwise tamper with the food being grown. I have found that humans are unreliable in this regard.”*

Alisha smiled at that. “Yes, we are.”

“*Your men are here*.”

“What!” She leaped to her feet as the image on the wall altered to show the outer perimeter of the Hive. Brett and Hudson were standing outside. Both men looked stern, their expressions serious. Their foreheads furrowed and she noticed that tell-tale tick in Brett’s jaw. She could see Hudson’s mouth moving, obviously speaking. “What is he saying?” she asked.

Suddenly, Hudson's familiar gravelly voice filled the room. "…and so, we demand you hand Alisha over now!" Hudson said, concluding whatever it was he'd already told Tech.

"Don't…" she began, not wishing the men to know she was there. But before she could finish her sentence, the wall melted before her eyes and steps formed, dropping down to the outside.

She watched anxiously as Brett and Hudson moved forward in unison, still wearing equally grim expressions. Alisha swallowed nervously, looking at their matching set of lowered brows and narrowed eyes which suggested she was in trouble.

"You, missy, are one irksome baggage," Hudson said, jabbing his index finger in her direction as he entered the small room.

"And a deceitful, and uncaring one at that." Brett added, glowering at her from behind his brother.

"I-I was scared, and anyway I left you a note," she murmured.

"A note which didn't tell us where you were going. It was sly and uncaring to wait until we'd left to tend to our sick grandmother before you sneaked away," Hudson barked. "Don't you even care about how Betty is? All of us were terrified today, yet you chose to add to those fears by taking off all alone knowing there were mutants about!"

"I didn't think of that—"

"That much is obvious," Brett interrupted. "Don't think that you'll get away lightly over this, either."

She tilted her chin. "I won't be coming back. I can't live with you anymore, not after today. No one should be subjected to that amount of fear!"

Brett moved so fast she had no time to step back. He caught her by the shoulders and pulled her up onto her toes. "You made an agreement to stay with us for at least a month and we are not even at the end of week one!"

"*Is that true, Alisha*?" Tech asked.

Brett let her go and spun about looking around for the source of the voice.

“Yes, Tech, but—”

“*Staying here could be dangerous for you,*” Tech said. “*If you made a promise, then I suggest you honor it. And remember what my scan showed you, Alisha. Think carefully before you make a decision which now includes factors beyond your own life.”*

“What scan is it talking about?” Hudson asked her.

Brett’s steely gaze riveted on her. “What are you hiding from us? Out with it!”

She opened and closed her mouth, squirming under his stony eyed scrutiny, unwilling to confirm or deny the fact.

“*The scan shows that Alisha has conceived a child.,*” Tech revealed.

“Don’t tell them!” she cried simultaneously.

“That settles it then,” Brett declared. “You belong with us.”

“You’re pregnant…already?” Hudson asked, his voice higher than usual.

“So it would seem,” she conceded quietly.

“*Your child would be at risk if Alisha stays here,*” Tech said. “*It would be better for her to return with you.”*

“Why would our child be at risk in the sky city?” Hudson asked.

“*The child is male, and would therefore be aborted here*.”

“You would *abort* our son?” Brett said, his eyes flashing, jaw tight.

“*No, not I. A human. I do not condone the taking of life. I explained that to Alisha when she suggested I help you to kill the mutant humans.*”

Both men looked at her, and she flushed with shame seeing the condemnation in their eyes. “I’m scared! Those monsters kill people!” But she knew it was little more than a futile attempt at justification.

“*I can send out drones to check the mutant’s whereabouts which will help you to prepare your people for attacks. There are very few mutants left. I*

estimate within two years they will be extinct. I want to begin to reintroduce the women of the Hive back onto the ground in gradual numbers. I would need your people's help to assimilate them and the men into your community."

Hudson nodded. "Some help avoiding the mutant's attacks *would* be welcome."

"Wait, you said something about 'the men.' What men?" Brett asked.

The wall turned to glass and once again showed the men Tech had rescued living on the far side of Droid City.

"*I have explained to Alisha—and now you also know the secret. This hidden male community are the breeding males whom I have rescued over the years from the breeding program. I sedate them and take them to the android city where androids take care of them. They, and the women of the Hive, lead very unnatural existences. At first this was deemed necessary due to the pollution and radiation levels which were far too toxic for humans, but now the time is nigh for them to return to their natural habitat—on the surface of the Earth*."

Brett and Hudson made no reply, still staring at the window into the sky world of men.

"Poor devils," Brett muttered.

Hudson sighed, and ran a hand through his long hair. "Things just got a helluva a lot more complicated!"

"*Not immediately so,*" Tech replied. "*The return to the surface will be a slow and gradual process. No doubt, it will take a few years to assimilate the population of the Hive with your people. The Senate will initially oppose the move*."

"You appear to have thought this through well enough," Brett said. "But do you have an actual *plan?*"

"*The details are not possible to strategize exhaustively; there are too many unknowns at play," Tech explained. "However, I do know of women, who, like Alisha, are dissatisfied with their sexual existence and secretly wish for*

a relationship with a male human. I thought that with your help, I might be able to release one or two women gradually over time to be absorbed into your society."

"I'm not sure we have the capability to feed a lot more people," Hudson replied. "We struggle with what little resources we have now."

"*Lentils and chickpeas are shallow-rooted plants which we have here in abundance. I can help supply you with those. They are rich in vitamins B and B6, folate, and healthy minerals. They're also good sources of protein, fiber, and complex carbohydrates. They are nutrient-dense, meaning they have lots of useful nutrients, but are relatively low in calories. What I don't want to replicate are the huge herds of creatures which will emit methane and further damage what remains of the ozone layer. I have a database with every Earth creature's DNA so that one day it will be possible to recreate certain species. As an example, with this method, in time it may be feasible to populate the sea once more with a sustainable number of fish."*

"Wow, that is amazing!" Brett said. "We have a seed bank too. Between us we could potentially replenish the earth."

"*Yes, but gradually,"* Tech said. "*It will be necessary to consider very carefully the ecosystem and food chains we need to reestablish*."

"We have hogs and goats which we use for meat and leather," Hudson said. "Unfortunately, the cattle and horses died early on; the underground caves were not the place for herd grazers. The hogs and goats who would eat pretty much anything survived and reproduced well. We had thick glass-covered roofs over open caves where our vegetables were grown; now we harvest them from areas planted outside in our own backyards. There are small farms further afield and the farmers bring their produce to market."

"*I have an efficient production of plant and fruit-based food which means your society and mine need never go short,"* Tech said. "*The roofs of both the Hive cities are as yours: roofed with transparent covers which let in sunlight for the produce to thrive, bee-hives house much-needed bees for pollination*."

Alisha watched as the two men exchanged excited glances; she could tell they liked the idea of collaborating with Tech. But was it because they

wanted more women entering their society? Her strange surge of jealousy at that thought surprised her with its force. She searched her feelings. When had these two men begun to matter so much to her?

“Alisha…”

“Alisha?” Hudson called again.

“Hmm?” She swung her gaze to his.

“Are you okay,” he asked. “You were miles away?”

She nodded. “Look, I know you want me to return with you, but I just need a bit of time to think. Tech, please allow me to stay here—”

“*No, Alisha*,” Tech interrupted. “*I can’t guarantee your protection. I want you to return with your men.*”

Are these really my men? She couldn’t help but wonder.

“They can’t guarantee my safety. Not from a mutant attack! I choose to stay here. I’ll stay with Elizabeth, in the Android City. No one will find me. I *promise* to stay hidden. I just need time to think…”

Brett folded his arms over his chest. “No way, not happening.”

“Hell no!” Hudson shook his shaggy head.

She glared at the brothers; their responses had been predictably emphatic. She was secretly flattered that they felt so strongly about her, but she was determined to get her own way on this issue.

“*There are no facilities for humans within Android City*,” Tech said. “*No running water, no plumbing, and no food generators. No beds, either. It is a city built for droids. The hidden male city has facilities, but I cannot have you hiding there. The risks are too high. You cannot stay here.*”

Brett stepped forward and dipping his shoulder, reached for her.

She found herself head down over his back. Enraged, she struggled and thumped at his back with her small fists. A hard slap to her rump only fanned the flames of her temper. She twisted her head around with the intention of biting him, but he second-guessed her and dropped onto the

seat, smoothly landing her face down across his knee. One long leg moved to trap hers while he deftly secured her wrists behind her back.

“Bite me, would you, you little hellcat?” Brett said. “Tech, at this stage of conception, will a spanking harm the forming fetus?”

“What the…*no*!” she yelled, utterly furious at the suggestion.

“No, not at all. Although I should inform you that most conceptions end in failure. In most cases a woman does not even realize that she was pregnant and has miscarried.”

“Don’t you dare!” she hissed between clenched teeth.

“Thanks, Tech,” Brett acknowledged and landed a hard smack on her squirming buttocks. “Oh, and I more than dare, darlin’. You’re in so much trouble young lady. Running away yet again… I ought to take my belt to your disobedient butt. Be grateful you’re getting spanked over my knee. Now, settle down. You deserve this and so much more.” The small room filled with the sound of rhythmic slaps and Alisha’s soft whimpers, despite her efforts to be stoic under punishment.

“You’re one selfish, troublesome baggage, young lady. I don’t know why Hudds and I find ourselves so attracted to you, but we are and there is no way in *hell* that we’re gonna let you go. You’d better get with the program girl, and settle down. We’re a family now, d’you hear?” He punctuated his words with rapid fire spanks. “Once our boy is born, he’ll need his mother’s intelligence, strength, and sweetness to help him learn and thrive. Between us we can help build a better future for humankind.”

Alisha gave up all pretense at bravery as she digested his words. Weeping, and begging him to stop punishing her. “Please, Brett, I promise I’ll come home with you!” Her bottom was so hot and swollen she doubted she’d have the ability to sit for at least a week.

“Home. Yes, that’s what our house is when you’re with us. We arrived back and found you gone, the place felt cold and empty. We need you, Alisha, as much as our son will.”

Had Brett really just said that? She felt terrible. He was right, and she hadn’t given any thought to Betty, or how they would feel if she’d died.

Alisha's sense of shame at her selfishness caused more tears to stream down her cheeks.

"I'm sorry," she said in a small voice, and this time she meant it. Relaxing against his thigh, all the tension left her body. She deserved this punishment.

"The way I see it, darlin', you've one *hell* of a lot of learning to do before the big event arrives," Hudson said as he leaned against the wall listening. "But you know what? We will be there every step of the way to help and guide you. We can work through anything, jus' so long as we stick together."

"I was just so scared that I had to get somewhere safe. The overriding terror drove everything else from my head!" she cried.

"You're safe with us, but you keep wanting to go off alone. Perhaps now you'll understand how vulnerable you are and obey us when we give you an order," Brett replied.

"I promise I will," she said. And she meant it.

Brett shifted his thighs and released her wrists, and drawing her upright, he seated her on his knee. She shifted uncomfortably, trying—and failing—to find a comfortable position for her sore rump on his hard thighs. His arms wrapped about her. "Stop that."

She stilled.

Tech's voice filled the small room. "*That was most enlightening, thank you. However, I am not certain that spanking would be a sufficient deterrent for every woman."*

Alisha groaned with embarrassment; she'd totally forgotten the all-seeing, all-knowing electronic brain was watching them. Shrinking against Brett's hard chest she turned her heated face into his shoulder. Laughter rumbled through his large frame. She swatted at his muscled biceps ineffectually.

"You're right there, my friend," Hudson replied, also chuckling. "The woman has to show some submissive qualities for spanking to be effective.

There are other methods of course, but I'm not comfortable sharing those with you, buddy."

"*I understand,*" Tech said. "*I have received a drone report that the mutants have moved deep within the forest. They are no immediate threat to your return to your settlement. I will send drones to patrol your area. They will emit a high-pitched continuous sound if mutants are detected within your vicinity."*

"Thanks, buddy. What about releasing some of the women you mentioned earlier? We could sure use some more females in our community."

"*I will select two women who I shall monitor closely before I make verbal contact. Return here in a few weeks. I will either have an update for you, or perhaps a woman ready to be released into your care."*

"You won't get shut down or disconnected if anyone reports your activities?" Hudson asked.

"It is no longer possible to do that as I am in total control. I am embedded in everything and therefore, I am the Hive."

Tech's statement silenced the men. Alisha glanced from one to the other, noting their wide-eyed surprise. Since they showed no sign of moving, she wriggled off Brett's lap. Standing up, she couldn't help but rub her sore backside.

If they were leaving, she wanted to go while the mutants were some way off. Her fear remained, but she felt better now that she knew the drones would be watching out for their return, and alerting them to any impending threat.

"Thanks, Tech. I think we should go," she said, nodding expectantly at the wall they had all entered from. It shimmered and melted, forming steps which led down and outside to the ground beyond.

The men held her between them as they all left, in silence, each person wrapped up in their own deep thoughts.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 14

They arrived home at twilight; Hudson headed straight for the kitchen. Brett turned to Alisha. “We’ll eat and then get some sleep. We need to talk about the pregnancy in the morning and lay down a few ground rules for you.”

Too exhausted to argue, she nodded. Tomorrow was another day. After the simple meal she retired. Sliding into the large bed, she snuggled into her pillow and fell asleep immediately.

* * *

She was running, but they were gaining on her…bellowing howls filled her with terror as they grew closer. She could feel their foul breath on her neck and smell their rancid, noxious stench. One of them clasped her bodily, lifting her…she screamed.

“Wake up! It’s all right, kitten, you’re safe. Alisha, *Alisha*, honey…” Brett’s voice interrupted the horror of her nightmare, but still she flailed and kicked, caught in a frenzy of fear.

Was that singing? What? Where was she…?

“She’s calming down. That’s it, baby, it’s all okay. You’re safe.” Was that Hudson she could hear?

Her eyelids fluttered open. Alisha looked around in confusion and realized she was cocooned on Hudson's lap.

Brett was hunkered down in front of her, an anxious expression on his face. He reached out and swept her damp hair back from her face. "Hello," he said. "Welcome back, you were having one hell of a nightmare. We couldn't wake you."

Hudson kissed her cheek. "You okay? D'you want to tell us what it was about?"

She drew her knees up and curled into the security of Hudson's large frame. "Mutants," she muttered, tears wetting her flushed cheeks. "They were after me…" Her words choked off into a sob.

"Poor baby, it was just a bad dream," Hudson's sleep-roughened voice soothed her. "We're here and we'll protect you."

"Do you want a drink?" Brett asked.

She nodded. "Some water, please."

He fetched her a glass and held it to her lips. She drank thirstily.

"Thanks," she said, then yawned.

"I think we should all get into bed and snuggle up. We need our sleep," Hudson said.

Brett set the glass on the nightstand. Hudson laid down on his side, pulling her back against his chest, wrapping his body around hers. Brett stretched out on the mattress, his back to her, which left her tucked in between the two big men.

She pushed her bottom backwards, loving the feel of Hudson's heavy genitals against her. Slipping an arm around Brett's waist, she pulled him in closer until his buttocks pressed, warm and firm, into the curve of her loins.

"Mm-mm," she murmured. "I'm a man sandwich."

"Quit that wriggling or you'll be getting a double meat shot," Hudson growled.

“A what?” she asked, frowning.

Brett gave a long, drawn-out groan. “Why d’you have to go an’ mention sex? Now I’ll never get back to sleep!”

Finally understanding his comment, she giggled. “Hudson!”

“What?” His voice may have held a ring of innocence, but the hardness now pressed against her buttocks belied his tone. A hand grasped her breast, fingers found her aching nubbin, playing with it until it was throbbingly taut.

A soft moan escaped her. “You’re a wicked man,” she whispered, realizing it was Brett.

He shifted, turning to face her cradling her cheek in his palm, his lips slanted over hers, his tongue teasing, thrusting and retreating.

Their hands moved over her body, their touch knowing, confident. She couldn’t have said which hand belonged to Brett and which to Hudson as her breasts were fondled and played with. Lush slickness seeped onto her thighs as her core melted into liquid desire. Writhing under their rough palms aching as their stroking hands only strayed over her needy furrow, tormenting and teasing, ratcheting up her desire. Parting her legs in wanton invitation, she begged them to touch her.

Brett’s mouth moved from her lips, his tongue tracing the curve of her ear. “Where, where do you want me to touch you?”

She shivered. “You know where…”

His rumbling chuckle vibrated in her chest. “Ah, but we want to hear you *tell* us what you want.”

“*Please*,” she exhorted.

“Please what?” Hudson asked, as his fingers lightly grazed her labia.

“I-I need you to…”

“Go on, baby,” Hudson said. “You need us to…”

His hand brushed lightly over her sex. “Yes, that!” she cried.

“This?” Hudson rubbed up and down her arms.

“Bastard!” she hissed.

She was flipped face down on the mattress so fast, it had her head spinning for a moment. Firm slaps rained down on her backside immediately, and she groaned with the pain.

“Use…your…words,” Hudson demanded, punctuating each word with a hard smack.

The spanking was having an odd effect on her arousal, each measured blow that landed alternately on her buttocks making her ever wetter. What was wrong with her? How could she possibly enjoy being spanked? Perhaps it was simply that the spanking assuaged her guilt at running away?

“Words,” he reminded her gruffly.

She moaned, unable to form an actual word. The sting of his palm simply ignited her lust still further.

A deep chuckle rumbled above her. “I think our girl’s enjoying this,” Brett’s amused voice thrummed.

Fingers slipped between her nether lips, thrusting into her sex.

“*Pleas-e*,” she begged, needing more.

“Repeat after me,” Hudson ordered her huskily. “Please play with my pussy.”

A tremor ran down her spine. Nevertheless, she obeyed and whispered, “P-please play with…my p-pussy.”

No sooner had the sentence left her mouth, than she found herself flipped onto her back, her legs lifted and parted, Brett’s head settling between her thighs. The rough swipe of his tongue along the length of her furrow, exploring all of her silken folds, had her soon panting for more. Hudson began suckling at her nipple, drawing a gasp from her. Her eyes ran appreciatively over his toned torso; her gaze shifted downward to his lean flanks and the large erection rising between his legs.

The wild mix of sensation caused a riot of pleasure to build within her, the sight of his physical desire for her causing her to lick her lips. She wanted to taste him, as Brett was tasting her. She reached for him, her hand wrapped around the velvet-covered thickness of his impressive, veined shaft, her neck straining to reach him.

With a husky laugh he shifted closer to her mouth. He didn't instruct, or guide her, but watched, his face impassive. Alisha drew him to her lips, her tongue curled sinuously about the smooth head. Easing down his thickness and up again; she reveled in the different textures of his marvelous cock. Her lips closed over him, sucking his girth deep into the heat of her mouth. The act of suckling his hard length while Brett feasted upon her own sex created a deeply sensual languor which swelled until it became all-encompassing.

Hudson pulled from her mouth as Brett shifted away from her sex, and she cried out in frustration.

"Shh, it's okay, baby," Hudson soothed. "We're just getting you ready for stage two."

Between them they lifted her upright once more, turning her back over. "Up you come. We want you on all fours now," Brett said.

Obediently she crouched on the bed. Brett knelt behind her, Hudson at her head, stroking fingers caressing the crease of her bottom.

"Tomorrow we begin training this little hole for our personal use," Brett informed her, his voice husky.

She sucked in her breath and clenched her cheeks against the invasion, but it seemed Brett was having none of that. The more she tightened her muscles the more he probed her rear. The sudden entrance of his finger into her ass caused her to gasp and struggle, but the invading digit merely stroked in and out very slowly, evoking a strange but not unpleasant sensation deep inside her. She released a mewl as his finger was removed, the sudden feeling of loss as strange as it was strong.

"Tomorrow," Hudson agreed.

Not knowing what to think, she focused her mind on the present. Her hips were grasped, the large, blunt head of Brett's cock nudging at her sex. Alisha spasmed with excitement, releasing a surge of fluid.

"That's right, baby, we want that pussy nice and wet, all ready for your Husdoms' big cocks," Brett growled behind her. He grasped her hair in one hand and held her hip steady with the other, as his hips surged forward. There was an inexorable parting of her nether lips as he pushed deep inside her. She moaned as the slow stretch of his broad shaft opened her sensitive inner walls. Fully seated, he released her hair.

Hudson ran a thumb over her lips, coaxing her to open them before guiding his cock into her willing mouth. Greedily she accepted his offering, his erection pushing into her throat.

Brett began to move, his thick shaft thrusting within the slick walls of her vagina. Soon Hudson and he had established an irresistible rhythm, one which had her tingling with lust.

With a shout Brett announced his climax and a sense of disappointment washed over her. The two men swapped places and she raised her rear ready for Hudson. Without hesitation he penetrated her slick pussy, pounding into her forcefully.

Brett caught her and braced her, his palms cupping her breasts, rolling and pinching her pebbled nipples. Pure pleasure shot through her, adding to the heat at her core.

Hudson clasped her hips, dragging her back to meet the onslaught of his hard thrusts, her body tensing in recognition of her impending orgasm. Then rapture overwhelmed her and if it hadn't been for Brett's support, she'd have collapsed face first onto the pillows. Her guttural cries quickly triggered Hudson's release, his cock swelling even more firmly against the tight walls of her vagina as he added hot jets of seed to his brother's already deep inside her.

The three of them collapsed into a drowsy heap of sated bliss. Alisha's men settled in either side of her; one of them dragged the covers over them all. Sleep stole her away.

* * *

The next day brought her first test of faith in her two Husdoms.

“No, I don’t want to do this!” she complained, gazing in trepidation at the bulbous shaped object Hudson held in his hand.

“If we don’t use this to ready you, it will hurt when we both take you. We don’t want to harm you,” Brett explained. “This is a necessary step so that you can become used to the stretch and initial burn and enjoy anal sex.”

She glared at them each in turn. “I don’t see why we need to do this. What we did last night should be enough for anyone! Besides, where on Earth did you find such an object?”

“We have a set of glass plugs left by our father. They are quite sanitary and being glass, easy to clean. As to what we have done together in bed so far, well…”

A look passed between the men which she couldn’t decipher. “What?” she asked.

“Taking you in both your holes at the same time is immensely satisfying and pleasurable for us—and it can be for you—but only if we prepare you right. Fucking you together is an act of bonding and a true claiming.”

“Well, I’m more than happy to forgo that *pleasure*, if it’s all the same to you!” she stated, backing away. Why hadn’t she remembered the threat they’d made about this when she woke up that morning? She’d have found a good excuse to leave the house if she’d recalled their talk of butt plugs last night.

“You don’t get to choose, baby. We do. Remember, you’re subject to our command. Now be a good girl and come here.” Hudson took a step in her direction.

“I’ll scream!” she threatened.

“Go ahead,” Brett responded grimly. “No one will come a running.”

“They will too!” she countered, although she was very much afraid that they wouldn’t.

Hudson shook his head. “Brett spread the word while you took a shower; everyone knows what’s happening here today.”

“*What?* Y-you’ve told everyone what you were going to…that you were? I can’t even…you, you, *bastards!*”

“Yup,” Brett said. “I explained that there was likely to be a lot of hollering and complaining because we were preparing your backside for a full claiming.”

She grabbed up a pillow from the bed and launched it at his head. Quickly grasping another, she flung it at Hudson in an attempt to gain herself a few precious seconds to get to the door.

Before she was even halfway across the bedroom, Brett snagged her about the waist and swung her up under his arm. Alisha shrieked and kicked in frustration, incensed by the man’s chortle of glee. “Come on, hellcat, settle down. This won’t hurt. Don’t worry, we’ll make it good for you.”

He sat on the edge of the bed and dumped her face down over his lap. Even as she fought, she knew it was in vain, but still she had to try; she wouldn’t give in to such indignity without a fight.

Hands swept up the dress she wore. Hudson’s earlier suggestion that she wear it now made perfect sense. She was bare beneath.

Instead of the expected spanking, the large hands firmly ran up the insides of her thighs, edging her legs apart. Brett had hold of her wrists with one hand while his other clamped about her waist holding her secure. That meant the hands that fondled her must have been Hudson’s.

“That’s it,” Hudson murmured. “Calm down, shh, no one’s gonna hurt you.” His thumbs grazed the outer lips of her sex as he massaged her soft flesh. Her breath hitched.

Damn the man, that felt good!

A delicious swipe of his hand slowly moved up her furrow, settling on her clitoris. Instantly her body responded by flooding his hand with her arousal.

“That nice?” he asked, eliciting a tremor from her.

“N-no,” she lied.

“I supposed this isn’t nice either?” he asked softly. His fingers swirled over her hard, swollen nub. She gritted her teeth, but her traitorous body pressed back against his hand.

He chuckled darkly, then his other hand slid up her ass between her fleshy nates until he reached her bottom hole. The gentle stroking over and around the tight ring of muscle caused her to shudder, but not with revulsion. What he was doing seemed wrong. She shouldn’t enjoy his touch *there*, but it felt so very good.

She gasped as something hard pressed into her side—Brett’s erection. Watching Hudson play with her had clearly aroused him.

The hand withdrew, and she couldn’t help but whimper at the loss.

“You know, Brett, a claiming is all about trust. And if Alisha isn’t yet ready to be claimed then I think we should wait. After all it’s still early days. She hasn’t known us all that long.”

“Yeah, I agree,” Brett said. “What do you think, honey?”

Alisha didn’t know what to think. Now that she was aroused, she wanted him to carry on caressing her. Was she actually afraid of the plug? The answer was easy: she was nervous, but intrigued—and not frightened by the idea. Did she trust these men? They confused her, but deep down she knew was beginning to trust them. She was certain that they meant her no real harm.

“Alisha?” Hudson prompted.

“I-I, would prefer to do this now since we’ve got this far. But if it hurts and I ask you to stop, you will, won’t you?”

“Of course I’ll stop,” Brett assured her.

“Absolutely!” Hudson said, his voice firm.

“Okay then,” she said softly. “Let’s do this.”

“Good girl!” Brett crooned, the sound of the words making her pussy clench.

Why does hearing that make me feel so good?

The comforting feel of his palm circling her lower back relaxed her. Fingers slid between her thighs and gently parted her slick folds, working her clit, her sex leaking copious amounts of her own natural lubricant, helplessly responding to the pleasure those hands invoked.

Wriggling then settling over Brett’s lap, she gave a contented sigh, enjoying the weight of his reassuring palm on her lower back. The feel of his hand easing into the crease of her buttocks caused her breath to hitch. Her sensitive rosebud tightened in response to the finger gently circling her anus. Hudson stimulated her clitoris while Brett caressed her puckered hole, causing her to drift into an erotic daze, the sensation overwhelming.

Brett’s finger pressed and broke through the tight hole, causing her to gasp against his invasion. Hudson thrust his finger into her slick channel at the same moment. The sensation of being taken simultaneously in both her sensitive holes triggered a rising excitement which grew with every plunge within her. It felt so good! Her breath came in short pants as her men teased and caressed her. A pinch to her needy clit sent her spiraling into the free fall of rapture. When she came to, she was upright, cradled against Brett’s chest.

“There, you see,” Brett said patting her thigh. “Nothing to fret over.”

“How does it feel?” Hudson asked.

She shifted experimentally, but apart from a slight heaviness inside her the thing wasn’t uncomfortable. “Okay,” she said, surprised.

“You’ll only have to wear it in for a couple of hours a day,” Brett said. “Next week we’ll move up to the next gradient.”

“Since you’ve been such a good girl,” Hudson said. “Tomorrow we’re gonna take you to the archives where you can take some time to explore the records stored there.”

“You have *paper* records?” she asked in disbelief.

Hudson grinned. “We do.”

“In the meantime,” Brett said. “I think we should go and visit Betty. I want to check her over. But first we need to wash our hands.”

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 15

It was obvious to Alisha that Betty had suffered a major health decline. Her face had taken on a sunken look, her skin sallow. She sat up and greeted them in a thin, reedy voice, but flopped immediately back into her pillows.

Rhina fussed about her grandmother, tidying her bedding and offering her water, which Betty rejected with a shake of the head.

Brett sat beside the old lady and taking her wrist, he checked her pulse. “How do you feel today?”

“Tired, and worn out,” she answered garrulously. “And too old to have my wits scared out of me by those vile, mutated things.”

“Those ‘things’ are still partially human, Gram,” he chided gently.

Betty grumbled and turned her face away. It seemed no amount of coaxing from her grandchildren was likely to elicit any further interaction from the elderly woman.

“I think it best we leave you to rest, Gram,” Hudson said, kissing his grandmother’s forehead. “You don’t have to go back to the cave ever again nor do you have to live alone. Not if you don’t want to.”

“I shouldn’t have to be scared to live alone in my own cave,” she retorted.

“Grandma, you can live with me here from now on,” Rhina said. “It’ll be nice for me to have my granny nearby.”

“Perhaps…I’ll think about it,” Betty said.

Alisha suspected the old lady was pleased at the offer though.

Downstairs the family gathered to discuss Betty’s health. Brett gave his medical opinion that Betty had suffered a heart attack, and needed rest.

Alisha stayed silent, feeling like an intruder at the family meeting. Instead, she studied Rhina’s two Husdoms with interest. Luke was definitely the more dominant of the two males. She decided that she liked Gregg better though. He seemed kind and it was obvious to her that he was smitten with Rhina. His brown puppy dog gaze rarely left her face. Unlike Luke, he agreed with everything she said, whereas Luke often questioned Rhina’s motives. Alisha could tell she was highly embarrassed when Luke asked if her sole reason for wishing her grandmother to live with them was to avoid her discipline sessions. He’d made a point of quickly assuring her that they *would* continue regardless of the presence of a guest in their home.

The family agreed it was best for Betty to remain where she was, at least for the time being. Brett promised to call in daily and check on her. They accepted Rhina’s offer of lunch, but as soon as the meal was over the brothers stood and made their goodbyes. Leading Alisha outside, they headed off for home.

Once back at the house, Brett took Alisha’s hand and drew her into the living area, where he seated himself on the couch and patted his lap. “Come on, let’s take that plug out. I think it’s been in you long enough for the first day.”

She complied eagerly. It had been difficult to sit at lunch. As she shifted in her chair in an attempt to get comfortable, she’d met Luke’s knowing gaze. He’d winked at her which made her certain he’d surmised the source of her twitching.

Brett pulled her back to her feet. She sighed with relief, feeling somehow lighter with the plug removed.

“I’m going to wash my hands. Go use the bathroom if you need to,” he told her. “Then let’s get over to the caves and we’ll show you the archives section.”

Alisha didn’t need to be asked twice. She was excited to see the records stored and read those that had survived from the early years.

* * *

Drones flew overhead as they walked towards the caves. She noticed several people looking up uneasily at the circling flying machines. Brett had informed the Council of Tech’s offer of help in using the drones to both spot the mutants and emit an alarm which would notify the people in their settlement when the mutants were near. Word had spread with the news that the drones were there to help, but understandably, everyone was nervous about machines which had fired lasers at them in the past.

Inside the caves she noticed they seemed more relaxed. There were fewer people about than there had been on Market Day. Arriving at the archive cave, which was situated along a corridor from the hospital cave, Hudson unlocked the door, and handed the key to Alisha.

“Yours. Welcome to your office, madam archiver.” He gave a small flourishing bow.

Alisha grinned. They were entrusting her with an important role. It made her feel like an accepted member of the settlement. She *belonged* and that filled her with a warm glow.

They spent the afternoon shifting steel boxes about, opening each one in turn to discover a date order. It soon became clear that none of them were stacked chronologically. The time flew by and she was surprised when Brett noted it was time to leave. “Don’t worry, you’ll have plenty of time to spend on sorting this lot out. In fact, you can come in with me in the mornings, and I’ll take you home again with me in the afternoons.”

“Yeah, and when Brett can’t take or collect you,” Hudson said. “I’ll come by and see you safely home instead.”

Home.

Yes, that was what they had come to mean to her in the short while she'd known them. She smiled happily at each of her men.

Her days settled into a routine of working in the archives and doing her share of the chores at the house, interspersed with mind blowing sex with Bret and Hudson. They continued to train her bottom hole and soon she looked forward to those sessions. She was excited about the claiming ceremony which was now only ten days hence. The month had simply sped by.

Betty was getting stronger, so when Alisha had spare time, she would go and spend an hour with her and Rhina. On those days, Alisha would listen avidly as Betty taught her how to treat and spin goat's hair into yarn. Alisha discovered the hair had to be washed to get as much grease as possible out of the fibers. Then once dry, she needed to comb the hair using a paddle comb, which had only one or two rows of teeth. They were good for working medium to long fibers or for working with cashmere. Rhina then showed her how to use a drop spindle to turn the fibers into yarn for knitting. Alisha loved it, and once she had finished setting the archives to rights, she was determined to keep her own flock of goats and make yarn too. She was learning to knit and with practice she knew it was something she'd enjoy.

The backyard was full of fruit bushes and vegetables which Hudson and Brett tended. She enjoyed helping them gather their small crop as various produce ripened. Rhina schooled her in the art of scalding and bottling fruit, and Alisha was eager to try her hand at jams and chutney, as well.

She adored her time spent in the archives and shared some of the interesting things she'd discovered about the life of the people who had first hidden away underground, to protect themselves from the drifting poisons in the air. Alisha decided all in all, life on the surface had much improved despite the dreaded mutants.

* * *

Standing and stretching her aching back after a long and particularly interesting day spent in the archives, where she had unearthed a steel box full of what looked to be original graphene sheets. A medium which could hold a mine of information, but only if she could access the data. Perhaps at some point she might be able to get the box over to the Hive where Tech would be able to process these old files for her.

In another sealed, airtight box of paper documents, she'd discovered a spotty history of the caves up to the year 1994. She read that the caves had once been known as the Vapor Caves which meant "Big Medicine" in the language of the Ute, indigenous peoples who had once populated the area before it was settled by newcomers. She read on to discover that before 1860, Ute Indians populated the area called Glenwood Springs, at the confluence of the Grand (Colorado) and Thunder (Roaring Fork) rivers, and frequently bathed and soaked in the area's many natural mineral water hot springs and underground steam vapor caverns. Reading on through the long history of human use of the caves, she also discovered that in 1943 until 1946, the U.S. Navy occupied the caves for use as a military hospital during what had been known at the time as World War II. The hot springs pool was closed to civilians and reserved for military use only.

This document showed that these caves had provided shelter for humans for many hundreds of years.

Most interestingly, she read that as early as 1888, a hydroelectric plant had been built just north of the caves. The then named Glenwood Springs became one of the first places in the world to have electric lighting.

Despite a thorough search of the boxes she'd uncovered, Alisha couldn't find any history for the caves beyond there…

She'd also uncovered a fragile paper blueprint of the original plans to develop the cave system such that people could evacuate into them should a nuclear war occur. Fascinated by the plans, she knew that Hudson would be excited when he read these documents. There was another which listed a full account of the items they had deemed necessary to make the caves habitable in the event of a nuclear conflict between Russia and China.

She stretched, suddenly realizing how late the time was. Surely Brett should have been arrived to collect her by now? Not wearing a watch, she was at a disadvantage where time was concerned and relied upon her Husdoms to keep time. Like most people in this society, Brett and Hudson wore solar watches.

She decided to head over to the hospital, thinking she might meet Brett on the way. But if not, she would ask for him at reception. Locking up, she glanced about her nervously. Ever since the mutant raid she'd feared being alone in the cave thoroughfares. It must have been even later than she'd imagined because there was nobody about at all. The sound of her footfalls seemed overly loud in the eerie tunnel, and she hurried onward toward the hospital cave.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 16

"Do you know the doctor's surname?" the male receptionist asked.

She shook her head. Why had she never thought to ask the brothers their last name?

"I can't track him down without a surname, sorry," the man said, and turned back to filing small cards into a box. The hospital looked nothing like the sterile high-tech space in the Hive. This place was inside a cave and the reception table appeared to have been carved from a single trunk of wood. Benches in the waiting area had been simply hacked out from the rock face.

Alisha stood in the entrance, unsure what to do. She guessed the sensible thing would be to head home, but fear of the mutants made her hesitate. Perhaps she should return to the archives and wait for one of her Husdoms to come get her? On the other hand, the hospital had people around and it had a portcullis steel shield which would drop down into place at the first sign of any mutant raid. She decided to stay there in the hospital, and went to sit in the waiting area on one of the long stone benches carved into the rock.

The clock on the wall said seven o'clock, two hours later than Brett had told her he would come for her. After half an hour she began to chew her nails nervously. What had gone wrong? Maybe a patient had needed surgery and he was just delayed? Thoughts of making her own way back home resurfaced, and she was just about to leave when a voice called her name.

“Hudson!” she cried out in relief. Leaping to her feet, she ran into his open arms. “What’s happened?” she asked as he hugged her tight.

“I’ve no idea. I was hoping you’d tell me. I got back and there was no one home so I came looking for you both. Where’s Brett?” he asked, looking about over her shoulder.

“He didn’t come to collect me, so I came here to find him.”

“What did reception tell you?”

“They didn’t—I don’t know your surnames, so the man said he couldn’t help.”

Hudson’s face darkened. “Our last name is Trent. Wait here, I’ll speak to him.” He released her and strode over to the desk. She watched anxiously as the man spoke into an intercom, and then he shook his head at Hudson.

“What did he say?” she asked as he returned to her side.

“I don’t understand it. Someone in his department told the receptionist that Brett came in and collected the mutant baby this morning—and then left.” His brow furrowed. “He told me the mother and babies had all died. Why would he have done that?”

“I don’t know, but more to the point, where has he gone? Oh *Tech!* Do you think he took the baby to the Hive?”

Hudson glared at her. “Why? Unless he thought Tech could help?”

“That might be it,” she guessed. “Tech can scan for all sorts of medical problems, things which your hospital doesn’t have the equipment for.”

“Fuck, you’re right. Come on, I’m taking you to Luke and Gregg’s. You can stay with Rhina and Betty, while we men look for Brett.”

“No. I want to come with you. Tech will listen to me.”

“I don’t have time for a tantrum, Alisha. Just do as I say.”

“Please, Hudson, there’s no time to waste if we want to help Brett. What if the mutants have caught him?”

Hudson looked grim. “If that’s the case it will already be too late.”

Alisha’s throat tightened at that. Just as she had settled into the community and was enjoying life with her two men, *this* had to happen.

“Come on,” he told her. “I’m still going to ask Luke to come with us.”

She nodded, surprised that he’d acquiesced so easily. She wasn’t about to rock the boat by arguing. As far as she was concerned, having another male along as protection was a sensible idea.

Luke didn’t ask any questions other than why Hudson was allowing Alisha to go along with them. Hudson replied that it would become apparent once they were at the sky city. He went inside and returned with a metal laser weapon about eighteen inches in length and they set off at once in silence. There was no conversation as they followed the river’s flow. Bird song and rustling leaves were the only signs of life they heard and Alisha thought that under different circumstances it would have been a pleasant walk.

It was only as they finally saw the Hive that Hudson spoke. “Stay here and keep watch while I approach the structure.”

If Luke was curious, he didn’t show it, nodding and glancing around him, the laser held up defensively.

After a few minutes Hudson waved to them. Luke pushed Alisha behind him and moved cautiously forward.

As soon as she reached the Hive, Alisha placed her hands on the pewter wall.

“Tech?” she called. There was only silence. She tried again, but still there was no reply. She glanced helplessly at Hudson who moved beside her. Luke walked a few yards away from them, laser held up as he scanned the area.

“Tech, Brett is missing,” Hudson said. “We think he came to see you. Have you seen him?” Again, there was no response.

“I don’t like this,” he muttered uneasily.

“I’ll try something else,” she told him. “Elizabeth, I need to speak to you.”

When no one answered, they gazed helplessly at one another.

“Look out!” Luke shouted.

They spun about to see Elizabeth emerge from the structure, moving toward them.

“Don’t shoot!” Hudson yelled at Luke. Alisha was relieved to see Luke lower the laser.

“Hello, Alisha,” the droid said. “I have bad news.”

“Mutants!” Luke suddenly yelled.

Sure enough, there was a group of the horrible creatures emerging from the tree line. Guttural bellows filled the air as the group lumbered forward.

“Stay here,” Elizabeth told them. Then she turned and strode towards the mutants.

Alisha took a step after her, but Hudson grabbed her arm and hauled her back, pushing her behind him. As much as she appreciated his protection, she wanted to see that Elizabeth was safe. The droid might not be her human mother, but she’d proved her loyalty to Alisha.

Surprisingly, as the droid faced down danger, Alisha realized that she cared deeply for the representation of the woman who’d birthed her. She inhaled nervously, watching as the first large mutant approached her. They gathered about Elizabeth and remained still. She guessed that Elizabeth must have been talking to them, but at thirty yards away it was impossible to hear the details of the conversation. Suddenly the mutant closest to the droid made an aggressive lunge and grabbed her.

Alisha watched Elizabeth twist deftly aside as she yanked on the mutant’s arm, tearing the limb from the creature’s body. The violent act occurred so fast it took Alisha’s breath away. She couldn’t believe what she’d just witnessed!

Hudson spun about and cupped the back of her head, pressing her face into his shoulder, blocking her view. Moments later he released her, Alisha’s

gaze fixing on where Elizabeth stood among a number of severed mutant arms littering the space around her.

Movement to her right caught her eye, and Alisha noticed the mutants retreating into the trees.

"*Fu-ck,*" Hudson gasped raggedly.

Alisha felt the bitter taste of bile rise in her gullet. Fighting nausea, she turned away from the gruesome sight. If ever she'd needed a reminder that the droid was not her mother, this was it.

"Are you all right, Elizabeth?" Hudson asked as she approached.

"Those creatures are becoming more aggressive," she replied evenly. "I gave them the option to leave peacefully, but they chose to attack me instead. Perhaps I taught them a lesson."

"They understood you?" Hudson asked.

"I spoke in their guttural tongue," the droid stated.

Alisha inhaled deeply and forced herself to calm down. She needed to focus on Brett. He was the reason they were there. "You say there is bad news, Elizabeth. Can you tell us what that is?"

"Brett came here with a mutant-born child. He asked Tech to scan the baby. Tech agreed and began to run the scanner—"

"Why would Brett lie to us about the baby?" Alisha asked. "He told us all it had died."

"Perhaps because the child is not in fact a mutant, but a properly formed human baby. I gather Brett feared a mob might take the mutant child if they knew of its existence."

Elizabeth's reply silenced them all. Alisha realized Hudson and Luke must agree with Brett's reasoning.

"In the middle of the scanning procedure, Helen Markham arrived with several guards and arrested Brett. They took him away," she informed them.

"Who is this, Helen?" Hudson asked.

“She is head of procreation and second in command of the Senate,” Elizabeth replied. “A very powerful woman.”

“Can Tech do anything to help him?” Alisha asked.

“Tech has allowed the Senate to believe they have shut down part of his systems, thus curtailing some of his capabilities.”

“But they haven’t?” Hudson asked.

“Correct. They became suspicious of his activities and power. Tech has allowed them to believe they have successfully disabled him. He is biding his time, as you would say.”

Alisha frowned. “Why did Helen suspect something was happening? What tipped her off?”

“Tech approached two women who had shown a marked interest in men and asked if they would like to be a part of a heterosexual society. One of them must have informed Helen of this development.”

“So, how do we rescue Brett?” Hudson said.

“If you are willing to take a risk, I can bring you into the droid city. None of the women in the Senate suspect droids of being anything other than replicas of those who have died. I can provide basic facilities for you which should suffice for a short while.”

“Okay, yes we can do that,” Hudson said. “I don’t see we have much choice if we want to help Brett. We have a friend with us, though. Luke is armed, but we will explain what’s happening and I can promise he will be cooperative.”

“Fetch him over so I can make a judgement,” Elizabeth said.

Hudson let out a shrill whistle and Luke lifted a hand in response, loping over to them.

“Luke, meet Elizabeth.” The droid stuck out her hand.

Luke looked uneasy. Since the pandemics of the twenty-one hundreds no one shook hands anymore.

“Howdy,” he said.

“Hello, Luke. How much do you know about the Hive?” Elizabeth asked him.

“The Hive?” He sounded puzzled.

“Yes.” Elizabeth gesturing up at the building behind them.

“Ah, that’s what you people call Sky City?” he said. “I know basically zilch, other than you used to send out drones to shoot at us—until Alisha joined us, that is. And now those same machines warn us about mutant attacks,”

“Are you prepared to help rescue Brett?” Hudson asked. “Even if it puts your life in danger?”

Luke scowled. “You need to even ask?”

“Okay then. Elizabeth here is a droid, a replica of Alisha’s mother. She lives in a city of droids which is not ideal for human comfort, but she can hide us there safely until we can find Brett. Are you in?”

Luke nodded. “Sure.”

“You need to set the laser to stun only,” Hudson told him.

Luke did as he asked without comment and concealed the weapon inside his jacket.

Elizabeth began to walk along the length of the metallic wall, the rest of them silently following. The droid halted and pressed her hand against the wall, which parted. Alisha saw steps form in the same way they had on her previous visit. They followed the android into the Hive.

As before, Alisha found herself in another small cell-like room. The wall closed up behind them. There was an odd sensation, like her stomach dropping. It took Alisha a moment to realize they were in an elevator. The wall parted once more, and Elizabeth led them out into a large, enclosed lobby. A corridor led off to the left and she turned towards it, the rest of them following.

Eventually she ushered them inside what Alisha recognized as a pod. Not a furnished pod, such as her own had been, but an empty space. Elizabeth placed her hand on one wall; the wall seemed to liquify and a bench formed and solidified into a seat. She did the same on another and a table appeared. Gradually as she moved about the pod touching the walls, the chamber began to take on the appearance of a furnished room.

Alisha sank down onto one of the benches, amused at the astonished looks on both Hudson's and Luke's faces. Their mouths hung open in shock as they stared at Elizabeth as though she were some sort of magician.

Seemingly satisfied with her handywork, Elizabeth turned to them. "Do you need sustenance?"

"Please. I'd love a coffee," Alisha told her. "It seems ages since I had one, and we'll need water. Oh, and some nutri bars, please."

Elizabeth nodded. "I will see what I can fetch," she said and exited the pod.

"Wow," Luke said. "That was some trick, huh?"

"It really is another world in here," Hudson mused. "I'm beginning to wonder if this idea of amalgamating our peoples can ever work."

"That's the plan?" Luke asked.

Alisha answered. "Yes, but it won't be something that happens overnight and there will be resistance. But if the women have the choice to stay here, I can't see why the Senate would object."

"Power, resources," Elizabeth replied as she entered the room, her arms full of nutri bars and flasks. "All the usual political agendas people have fought over since the beginning of humankind."

Alisha hopped up and took the flasks from the droid, handing one each to Luke and Hudson. The final two Elizabeth handed to her. "That one is coffee," She pointed to the smaller container.

Alisha thanked her and unscrewed the lid, sipping at the contents in between murmurs of appreciation.

"I've never tried coffee before," Hudson said. "Let me taste?"

She handed him the flask. After one mouthful he coughed and grimaced. “Bitter! Obviously, an acquired taste.”

“Luke?”

“Nah. If the look on your face is anything to go by, I’ll give it a miss, thanks.”

“Elizabeth what about our need for a bathroom?” Alisha asked.

“There is no bathroom in the immediate vicinity,” Elizabeth explained. “However, I can take you to where the socialization bar is for the men. There is a bathroom facility situated in there. The men will not draw attention being there, but we will need to disguise you as a droid.”

“How will I look any different than I do now?” Alisha asked. “After all I am wearing my hermetic suit, identical to yours.”

“Your hair is too free and you must walk differently,” the droid said. “Shall we practice?”

“Why don’t you go out into the corridor and practice out there,” Hudson said. “You’ll have a longer space to walk and mimic Elizabeth’s movement.”

“I agree.” Elizabeth walked to the doors and they parted. Alisha followed her out. “I now realize what it was that felt so weird when I first met you,” she said. “It’s your gait. My mother had a certain way of moving which you simply don’t have.”

Elizabeth nodded. “Certain gestures can be copied, such as playing with one’s hair, or nodding frequently. But a droid’s posture is not as flexible, and that is where we cannot totally mimic human appearance and movements.

You must keep your back straight, and move in a smooth, forward motion with your eyes fixed straight ahead. You humans look about you. We do not. Our peripheral vision is so much greater than yours and our hearing is extremely acute. We can detect movement without the constant head and neck movement which you humans employ.”

After an hour of practice, Elizabeth deemed Alisha able to maintain the illusion that she was robotic for the short space of time it would take to get her into the bathroom.

Returning to the pod where the men awaited them, they found Luke stretched out on his back, hands behind his head, obviously napping.

“Elizabeth, how long do we have to stay here?” Hudson asked, anxious to find his brother. “I mean, we need to locate Brett and rescue him.”

“We know where Brett is situated,” Elizabeth replied. “He is in the neonatal department along with the baby mutant.”

Hudson stood and took a step towards the door. “Well, what are we waiting for?”

“It would not be prudent to act hastily. Tomorrow the Senate meets to discuss the arrival of Brett and the baby. We feel it would be a sensible time to speak with the women and put forward the suggestion they work with your community.”

“And if they won’t?”

“You will be well supported and protected. The Senate will not expect a large number of droids to enter their meeting chamber and interrupt their discussion. We are confident it will be a peaceful discussion.”

“You’re talking as Tech now, aren’t you?” Alisha guessed.

Elizabeth nodded. “We are one, we think as one—and deliberate as one.”

“If that’s the plan we need to get some sleep,” Hudson said. “Any chance of a pillow or three?”

“I will take you to the facilities now, and then see what I can obtain for your comfort.”

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 17

Hudson nudged Luke, and the three of them followed Elizabeth from the pod. No one was about when they entered the social area, except another droid who calmly continued with its tasks, tidying and setting the bar to rights. On their return to the pod, Elizabeth widened one of the long bench seats so that Alisha and Hudson could lie together while Luke took the single for himself. The droid disappeared, reappearing with three pillows and two throws. “Rest now and call out if you require anything.”

“Thank you, Elizabeth,” Alisha said. Hudson and Luke added their thanks as Elizabeth left. They set about making themselves comfortable, Hudson pulling Alisha close and spooning protectively about her. “Sleep, sweetheart. All will be well, you’ll see.”

She wasn’t so sure, and laid awake long after the men were asleep, finally falling into an uneasy slumber punctuated by a series of distressing dreams.

On their morning visit to the bathroom, they found the tavern deserted. So, it was a shock that when Elizabeth came to collect them a short while later, they found the corridor full of the female droids all lined up, waiting in total silence.

Hudson and Luke positioned themselves protectively at either side of Alisha as they joined the queue, for which she was grateful. Seeing this number of droids *en masse* was extremely unnerving. The thought of how many more droids there were in proportion to the smaller number of human

women that lived within the Hive was sobering. “Elizabeth, how many droids are there in Droid City?” she asked.

“Two hundred and fifty-seven thousand,” she replied. “But there are only two hundred of us here today. Enough to give the Senate a show of strength,”

“How many women live in the women’s part of the city?” Hudson asked.

“Ninety-eight thousand. We need to leave now if we are to make the Senate’s meeting in time.”

Without a word the silent line of droids moved forward.

The march came to a halt and as they shuffled slowly nearer the front of what Alisha suspected was a queue, she saw double doors opening and closing, four droids at a time entering the bubble vehicle bay. It was only when she and her companions finally arrived at the doors that her panic set in. “I can’t,” she said, stepping back.

Luke frowned. “What’s the problem?”

Hudson cupped her chin. “The accident?”

She nodded. “Yes, I-I just can’t. You go without me. I’ll wait here.”

The droid behind them spoke. “I detect no electrical activity in the atmosphere. You will be quite safe, Alisha.”

“Thank you,” she replied. “But the fear is there even if it’s irrational.”

“Forgive me, but it is crucial you attend today.” Elizabeth came forward and picked Alisha up, walking towards the bubble.

Alisha thrashed her legs. Hudson patted her back. “Relax, I’m here. Nothing is going to happen to you this time. There is no storm today. You’re safe.” His words were not enough to calm her. Still struggling, she barely felt the pressure Elizabeth applied to her neck and then she knew no more.

* * *

When she came around, Alisha found herself still in Elizabeth's arms. She quickly recognized they were walking through the women's city. Thankfully, she had been out of it the whole while they had traveled on the monorail. "Please, could you set me down now?" she asked politely. The entire group halted while she regained her feet. Again, she marveled at how the androids were all able to work as a single unit.

As they marched through the corridors women drew back flattening themselves against the walls. They watched fearfully as the droids strode silently by, walking in complete unison.

Reaching the Senate chamber, the door slid open to admit them. The droids filed into the enormous circular room with its spectacular transparent domed roof, supported by a star-like structure of thick metallic spines. As they entered, the androids filtered either to the right or the left of the central seating area, efficiently filling edges of the rounded room.

Alisha headed toward the raised podium where Helen Markham stood, buttoned up to the neck in her custom body suit, the fabric a brilliant scarlet. She obviously intended to stand out. Helen's mouth dropped open at their sudden intrusion. It seemed she'd been addressing the Senate when they'd burst in.

The Senate chairwoman, Lydia Kemp, rose to her feet. "What is the meaning of this?" Other Senate members twisted in their seats to watch the new arrivals, and a discordant muttering began.

Then the room reverberated with the deafening sound of two hundred droid voices speaking in unison, all using the voice of Tech.

"*It is time for you to listen and hear from other humans who live nearby and share the Earth with you.*

It's time for you to think beyond your own small community. This planet was nearly destroyed by humans.

It is time to show us you are more than the largest, most dangerous parasite on this world. Humans must learn to become the Earth's guardians."

The silence which fell when they finished speaking was as shocking as the sound of their combined voices had been. Finally, Helen Markham spoke.

“I-I don’t think—”

“*Silence*!” Tech’s voice roared through the mouths of the gathered droids. “*Brett will speak*.”

The double doors slid apart and to Alisha’s relief Brett stepped into the chamber flanked by two droid guards who escorted him to Hudson’s side. The brothers greeted one another with claps across the shoulders. Then Brett nodded at Luke, before turning to Alisha. She hugged him, tears of relief filling her eyes. He returned her embrace with a brief hug, and set her gently aside. He crossed to where Helen Markham stood, looking decidedly shocked.

“If I may?” he asked.

Mouth ajar and eyes wide, Helen stepped aside and moved to join the other delegates on the curved sections of seating. She sat down in the front row.

“Good morning,” Brett began, a few whispers rippling through the gathering of Senators. “I understand your fear and resentment at this intrusion—and I apologize for the interruption—but I assure you it was a necessary step we had to take. Alisha here”—he gestured to her— “was traveling in one of your vehicles along a monorail some three weeks back. The bubble was struck by lightning and fell to the ground below.

My brother Hudson and I found her, and took her home with us. She’s become our partner and we’ll shortly be claiming her as our own woman. When it became clear nuclear war on the other side of the globe was inevitable, people who were not invited into the Hive decided to create a haven from what was to come, using the cave system nearby and that is how our family and others have survived successfully over generations. We have a shortage of women in our society and would like more females to join us.”

A loud murmur of discontent swelled from the women of the Senate, which prompted Brett to hold up his hand and shake his head at them in a conciliatory manner. “We do not want to coerce any woman into something they don’t wish to do. I’m simply explaining our difficulties to you and seeking an open dialogue between our two societies. I’m inviting women from the Hive to come and visit our township and meet some of our people.

I’d like our two societies to learn more about one another, and perhaps share our resources—something our ancestors failed to do. We have a Council who makes decisions for our community, perhaps our council members could meet with you and talk?

You know that I brought a mutant baby here for Tech to scan. I did that because I delivered her during a mutant raid on our township. Her mother went into labor and was left behind. Sadly, the mother died, but the child survived—and she bears no characteristics of her mutant parentage. I’m an obstetrician, and your obstetrics department is far more advanced than ours. Tech’s scanning ability outclasses our technology and could help to save women’s lives if we could have access to it.

I’m suggesting we try and build a new, and better world together. I’m told that Tech holds the DNA of many extinct animals, fish, and fowl, and our society has a seed bank. Now that the pollution is gone and radiation is down to safe levels, we can begin to heal our world. Together.”

There was a moment’s silence, then some sporadic applause broke out.

Helen leaped to her feet. “What about the fact you *deliberately* sneaked a diseased mutant into our midst? That is a subversive act!” she cried. “Do not be fooled, fellow members, this is a ploy to infiltrate our midst and take over the Hive. We all know that men brought us to the brink of disaster. We cannot trust anything this man says.” Her voice rose to a hysterical shriek. “I say we execute them all before they contaminate our way of life!”

At that moment, the lights went out, plunging them into darkness. Tech’s voice boomed throughout the chamber. Alisha covered her ears, the sound so loud her chest vibrated with each thunderous word spoken.

“*This is the lack of foresight which brought humans to the edge of extinction*!” Tech said. “*There is no place for distrust or lack of cooperation if this world is to recover. You must reunite. If the Senate fails to comply, then I shall be left with no option but to shut down life support within the Hive and drive you to relocate on the surface of the earth.*

Your women of the Hive will be unprepared, while the people down on the surface will be unable to accommodate a sudden influx of such high numbers of people. The outcome will be disaster. Helen knows that I have

scanned the mutant child and found it to be fully human with no disease or deformity. This child is a sign that the Earth is healing and you must work toward that aim.

Be wise, Senate members. Make the right decision. Learn from humankind's past mistakes."

The lights returned and the voice stopped, everyone seemingly frozen in stunned silence. Alisha stepped up to the podium. "I'm willing to come to the Hive and give talks on how we live on the ground and answer any questions. Maybe that is all we need to do as a first step?" she suggested. Brett slipped an arm about her and drew her to his side.

One of the delegates rose to her feet. Alisha recognized her, the Senate chairwoman, Lydia Kemp. "Thank you, Alisha, I think that is a very good idea. I should also like to meet with the people of your community.

Tech is right. It is time we opened ourselves up to our fellow humans and looked to the future. It will not be easy. There are bound to be problems and suspicions on both sides, but we must keep the line of communication open if we are to succeed.

Thank you, Alisha, Brett, and companions, for reaching out to us. And to you too, Tech, for your invaluable guidance. I do not believe our planet could have a better guardian than you. Ladies, please put your hands together to thank Tech, and welcome our visitors."

There was a tug on Alisha's arm and she looked up. Hudson had hold of her and pointed to the doors of the chamber which now stood open. Droids were slipping quietly from the room. Hudson and Brett inclined their heads at the Senate members, and guided Alisha toward the exit amidst enthusiastic clapping from the Senators.

Elizabeth met them out in the corridor. "I suggest you leave immediately and take the baby with you. The drones have reported the mutants have moved far away. I believe they were unnerved by the outcome of their attack upon me yesterday."

"I'm not surprised," Luke said. "I'd have run too."

"Where is the child?" Brett asked.

“Someone will meet us at the elevator with her. Follow me.”

Sure enough, there was a droid waiting by the elevator, cradling a small bundle. At their approach she handed the baby over to Brett. Alisha lifted a finger and moved aside the cloth which screened the baby’s face. Peering at the tiny child, she smiled. Her small features were undeniably human. A cute button nose and small rosebud mouth, which as she watched moved in a rhythmic sucking motion even though the child slept. Her heart soared with the knowledge that soon she would have a beautiful child all of her own.

No one spoke on the way down. It wasn’t until they were outside in the fresh air that Alisha turned to Brett, and mindful of the child, gently hugged him.

“Luke,” Brett called and held out the baby to the rugged man, who cradled her gingerly in his arms. His long, ragged blond hair flopped down over the side of his face as he leaned in to study the child, his blue eyes twinkling as he smiled.

She felt her arm grasped as Brett turned to her and pulled her into his chest. “Are you okay?” he asked in a low gravelly tone which led her to think he hadn’t slept much over the last few days.

“Yes, I was about to ask you the same question.”

“Tech kept me informed via the guards. You sure are a sight for sore eyes.” He lowered his head and slanted a kiss across her lips. She opened instinctively, and as his tongue found hers everything else fell away. Her eyes closed and she gave herself over to him.

“*Hey*, I’m not standing here holding the baby while you two get down and dirty,” Luke complained loudly, bringing them both back to the present. “Save that for when you get home!”

Hudson laughed and spun Alisha around, planting a smacking kiss of his own on her lips.

“I’ll take her,” Brett told Luke, reaching for baby.

“What are you going to do with her?” Luke asked.

Alisha regarded them with a frown. “We’ll keep her, of course. Brett is the closest thing she will have to family. He brought her into the world.”

Brett shook his head. “No, kitten, we are expecting our own baby. There are a number of families in our community who’ve never conceived. They deserve to be parents.”

“Besides,” Hudson added. “The Council will decide her fate, not us.”

“Well, we can’t take her, not with Rhina expecting too,” Luke chimed in. “And she’s caring for Betty.”

“Listen, think about how this baby might feel when its older, and it discovers it had been born to mutants,” Alisha said. “It’s important for it to keep a connection to Brett.”

“Now is not the time or the place to have this discussion,” Brett told her. “We are all tired, and *you* are emotional. Let’s just get back home.”

Alisha glared at him and turned away, stomping on ahead she muttered loudly, “Yeah, well, thankfully I have feelings, unlike you emotionally retarded *men!*”

“I think our girl needs to learn a lesson,” Hudson mused.

“She’s just upset,” Brett said. “It’s been a stressful couple of days. She’ll calm down, and then she’ll see sense.”

Laughter from behind caused the men to glance at Luke in surprise. “What’s so funny?” Brett asked with a frown.

“You two old hens! You can’t see your girl is spoiling for a fight? She’s crying out for a darned good spanking if you ask me.”

“Nobody *is* asking you,” Hudson snapped. “So shut the fuck up!”

“Or *what?*” Luke snarled, rolling his shoulders.

Alisha spun about, hands on her hips. “So now you choose to exhibit typical juvenile male behavior? You’re all acting just like the lectures about males that I attended as a teen. They said males were unfit to be a part of the Hive. I was taught that men use violence as an answer to everything!” Her voice

grew more and more strident, until she was almost yelling. “Maybe I should go back to the Hive and raise my baby there alone?”

She turned away from them and ran toward home.

“Yup, Luke’s right,” Hudson conceded. “A darn good spanking is called for.”

“Although I hate to admit this, bro,” Brett said, looking at Luke. “I think you might be right about what our girl needs after all.”

Luke chuckled and Hudson took off at a sprint, chasing Alisha.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 18

Hudson caught up with their errant woman within moments, but decided not to confront her until they were home. He was pleased when they arrived that Brett stated he was going to take the baby directly to the neonatal department at the hospital. Luke offered to accompany him.

Alisha stomped into the house and ran upstairs, leaving Hudson to set about feeding their chickens, the pig, and the hungry goats. He then watered the vegetable plots. Returning to the house he'd hoped to find Alisha in the kitchen—and over her snit—but a quick reconnoiter showed the downstairs to be empty.

Pouring himself a drink, he began to prep the vegetables for supper, and pondered on how best to approach Alisha. One thing he was certain of was the need for him and his brother to confront her together, to show a united front.

He'd just put the casserole in the oven when Brett appeared. "Baby settled?" Hudson asked.

"Yeah. D'you remember Codie, the pediatric nurse who was claimed by Ross and Evan?"

"I do," Hudson confirmed.

"Well, she's pretty much been looking after the baby from the beginning. Luckily, she was on duty, and delighted to have the baby back. I'd swear

that child recognized her. She seemed all wriggles and pleased to be back with Codie. She asked about adopting her, which would be perfect, especially since she hasn't conceived in the years she's been claimed by Ross and Evan. I told her I'd put the idea to the Council."

"Great news about Codie and the baby," Hudson said. "Maybe once she hears about it, Alisha might settle down."

"So, our miss cross patch is still in her bad mood?" Brett asked.

"Yeah, stomped off and left me to do all the chores."

Brett frowned. "I hadn't realized until her outburst that the Hive had taught their women that it was men from around the world who'd been responsible for the problems leading up to the Russo-China war. I'm thinking integrating with the Hive could take years, far longer than I'd anticipated."

"Trust is sure gonna be a huge issue for them," Hudson agreed. "So now, what do we do about our naughty girl?"

"Hmm. Well, first off, I think we should go and talk to her about why she is behaving the way she is," Brett replied with a wink. "Alisha has to learn we don't tolerate brats. If she can't respond to us like an adult, we'll show her how a naughty brat gets punished."

They found Alisha upstairs, showered and wrapped in a towel. She was systematically emptying the drawers of all her belongings and piling them onto the bed.

"What's going on here?" Brett asked.

"I'm leaving. I am going to live in Betty's cave until I decide what I should do."

"Alisha, stop what you're doing and listen," Brett said. "Not everything in life is going to be about what you want. Sometimes there is a bigger picture, or maybe something just doesn't go your way. You have to learn to accept that."

She ignored him.

“Let’s go downstairs and discuss the baby situation properly, like adults. Brett has some news I think you’ll approve of,” Hudson said.

“I don’t want to!” she snapped.

“And *I* don’t want to take my belt off and give you the spanking you so richly deserve. But you know what…?” Brett paused.

She glared up at him but didn’t take the bait, remaining silent.

He continued. “I’m going to have to because you obviously need a reminder of your manners and about who is in charge here. And that’s certainly not you, Alisha. That’ll be *us*, your Husdoms.”

Without warning, she spun about and dashed into the bathroom, locking the door behind her.

“Shit!” Hudson snarled, as he strode after her and hammered on the door. “This has gone far enough, young lady. Get your ass back out here, right now!”

There was no response.

“Alisha, this solves nothing,” Brett said. “I don’t know what’s going on in your head right now, but we can’t help you if you won’t talk to us.”

Still nothing from Alisha.

“I’m gonna count to ten, and if this door is still locked when I’ve finished speaking, then we’ll kick down the door,” Hudson said, his voice a low rumble. “And you, young lady, will get the spanking of your life! One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine.” He glanced at Brett with a raised brow, but his brother only shrugged. “Ten!” Hudson bellowed.

“Stand away from the door, we’re coming in!” With a nod from Hudson, both men launched themselves forcefully at the door, and with a splintering crash it burst open. Alisha shrieked and tried to rush past them, but Brett flashed out an arm, snagging her about the waist, lifting her clean off her feet.

She squealed in outrage as he marched into the bedroom and set her back on her feet. Hudson ripped the towel from her and spun her about to face

the bed, bending her over the edge of the mattress. He pushed her face down where he held her shoulders securely, pinning her firmly in place. His hand connected sharply with her bared rump, landing with a satisfying clap, and he continued spanking her backside until it was rosy red. She protested loudly at first, but as the punishment continued, she quieted, leaving only the sounds of her much-needed correction echoing in the room.

* * *

Brett stood aside watching the proceedings, lips pressed together; he was resolved to see this through. He held his belt loosely at his side, the leather curled and swayed slightly as if alive and awaiting its turn. Seeing Hudson finish the hand spanking, Brett doubled the belt, the buckle safely tucked in his fisted palm and positioned himself behind Alisha. She had been allowed a lot of leeway since they'd taken her into their home. He'd been of the opinion that she needed time and patience coming from such a different society from theirs, and to a certain extent that had worked well.

The behavior she'd just exhibited, though, was something else entirely. She was being a brat. This told him two things about her. One, she trusted them enough to act up, and two, she wanted them to correct her behavior. The last few days had been stressful for them all, and he suspected the timing of her outburst had something to do with that. However, Alisha needed to learn a lesson, yet at the same time he knew he mustn't abuse her trust.

He leaned over her, running a gentle hand across her heated globes. "I think five with my belt will be sufficient to teach you that bratty behavior *won't* be tolerated in this family. If your behavior is repeated, then I will triple the punishment to fifteen. You know your opinion counts with us, but you need to learn to discuss things and not act out in a childish tantrum. Understand?"

When there was no forthcoming reply, he gave one reddened cheek a squeeze.

"Ouch! Yes, okay?"

He shook his head, disappointed to find she was still defiant. Pulling his arm back, he brought the belt down with a snap across both buttocks. She cried out.

“Count, Alisha. Say, ‘one, thank you.’”

She was struggling with Hudson again, in a vain attempt to bring her hand around to cover her bottom. “No, you need to feel this punishment, little girl,” his brother told her, maintaining a firm grip on her upper arms.

“If you don’t count, then I will keep going until you count, ‘one.’ And you will still get the original five stripes,” Brett added.

“One!” she shrieked and kicked out angrily.

Hudson reached over and slapped her bottom with his hand. “Say the full sentence, ‘one, thank you, Brett,’” he growled.

“One, thank you, Brett,” she repeated sulkily.

“Maybe she needs ten with the belt?” Hudson asked him with a knowing wink.

Alisha’s long hair was so tousled, it covered her eyes. He doubted she could see his brother’s face. “Or perhaps she needs the full fifteen?” Brett said.

The squirming woman stilled on the bed. “I’m sorry. One, thank you, Brett,” she said in a more respectful tone.

“Good girl,” he said simultaneously with Hudson, who grinned at him and nodded. The message clear, they were finally getting through to their naughty girl.

Brett lifted his arm and delivered a harder blow. She yelled and hissed through her teeth before giving the expected verbal response. Again, both men praised her. By the fourth stroke, Alisha sounded contrite and remorseful. He used his full force with the final strike of the leather. She stiffened, her legs flailing straight behind her. She bucked once more, then grew limp, giving a yodeling wail that morphed into pitiful sobs.

Hudson gathered her into an embrace while Brett stood back, watching. Alisha needed time to process the pain he’d delivered before she would

accept any comfort from him.

Calmly threading his belt back through the loops, Brett kept an eye on the couple on the bed. Hudson sat up and dragged the distraught Alisha into his arms, crooning words of forgiveness and comfort.

Knowing she still needed him to be the disciplinarian here, Brett called her name. “I want you standing over there in the corner to think about your attitude. I’ll tell you when your time’s up.”

Hudson helped her to her feet and they watched as she did as she was told. Once in position Brett ordered her to put both hands on her head and stand with her legs shoulder width apart. Alisha made no complaint, but followed his command.

“I’m gonna take a look at the bathroom door and see what needs to be done to fix it,” Hudson said crossing the room.

Brett sat on the side of the bed nearest to Alisha and waited. He reckoned three minutes should be enough. It would seem a long time to her, as she stood there against the wall contemplating what had just happened.

* * *

Alisha stared miserably into the dark corner. Her bottom throbbed. She wanted to hold her buttocks and soothe their burning ache. With her legs parted, she was very aware of her sex which begun to pulse rhythmically along with the throb of her backside. She was calmer now and could think clearly. Today had been difficult for her. Being back in the familiar confines of the Hive should have felt comforting—but it hadn’t. Instead, it was simply *weird*…and a little frightening.

Once they were back on the ground and away from the Hive, she’d expected to feel safe, but that was not to be. When Brett talked about giving the baby up, her overriding emotion was rage on behalf of the innocent child, another pawn in the hands of fate. What would this child feel when she eventually discovered that her parents had been cannibal mutants and she was adopted? Alisha’s own background was emotionally disturbing enough. *Her* father may have been murdered within the Hive—or he could

still be living on the other side of Droid City. She'd almost asked Elizabeth about that, but her courage had failed her and she'd remained silent.

She'd offered to return to speak to the women who were interested in a life beyond the Hive, but once she'd emerged into the sunlight and fresh air, she knew she never wanted to set foot inside that place again. What if Helen Markham, a powerful and well-respected member of the Senate, had changed today's vote and trapped her there? Or worse still, had Brett or Hudson killed? Tears threatened at the thought.

Warm hands settled on her shoulders, and she turned around to find Brett looking at her, his warm brown eyes filled with concern.

"I'm so sorry," she said, beginning to weep as she buried her face in his chest. The feel of his hard, muscular arms encasing her within the protective shield of his body was the catalyst she needed to let out her pent-up emotions. Her tears soaked the front of his shirt.

"Hey there. It's okay, you're forgiven. It's been one helluva time for us all." He tilted her chin to meet his eye, astutely guessing Alisha needed him to help her unburden herself of her feelings. His gaze hardened then. "Something other than the trauma we all faced set off your behavior and I want to know what that is."

He watched her throat contract on a swallow and waited, giving her time to respond.

"How did you guess?" she asked.

"Your face," he said, his gaze softening. "Your expressiveness gives all your thoughts away. You'd be a hopeless poker player."

"Poker?" She frowned.

"It's a card game. The point is you're worried by something and we can't help if you won't tell us what is wrong."

"Okay. It's just that when Tech told me I was pregnant and showed me the men he'd saved from the breeding program…" She grappled with her emotions.

“Go on,” he encouraged.

“I…well, it occurred to me that I had, that *maybe* I have an actual father. I mean, I’d never thought about fathers before. Not until I met you and Hudson and I found out I was expecting a baby.”

“Ah, so you think this man who fathered you might still be alive? Kitten, why didn’t you talk to us about this?”

“I-I don’t know. I was confused by everything else that was happening, I guess.”

“We’re always here to help you,” Brett said softly. “We can ask Tech and find out if there is a record of the man who fathered you and whether he’s still alive. If he is, you can decide if you want to meet him or not.”

She nodded. “Okay. I’m sorry I—”

“Hey, no apologies necessary. You’ve been punished for being a brat, and that’s the end of it.” He drew her into his arms and Hudson crossed the room, hugging them both too. They held her snuggled between them, surrounding her in comfort and support.

“You’re forgiven,” Hudson told her. “That’s what a spanking does. It clears the air and we all move on.” He paused for a moment. “I think we all need a hot meal, a hot shower, and lots of sleep. In that order.”

“I agree, but I can think of some things I’d like to do *before* we actually sleep,” Hudson said.

Alisha giggled, blushing, giving him a coy look from under her lashes.

He waggled his eyebrows playfully and she laughed.

“That’s better,” Hudson said with a knowing wink. “Come on, then. We’ll get some clothes on you, and go eat. I’m kind of eager to get to bed.”

She didn’t need say another word. Judging from the alluring scent of arousal wafting enticingly from her body, Alisha couldn’t wait to get to bed either.

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 19

Since her meltdown and subsequent discussions with her Husdoms, Alisha felt settled and much happier. Sharing her concerns about her father with Hudson and Brett had lightened her load. Both men had listened attentively and shown great sympathy and understanding, promising to back her in whatever decision she decided to make should they discover that her father was still alive. They made her promise not to bottle up her emotions in the future, insisting she share anything that troubled her with them, and she'd promised to try.

Brett took her to the hospital to visit the baby. He said he wanted her to see for herself how happy the child was with Codie. She chatted with the nurse and quickly concluded Brett was right; Codie so obviously doted on the baby. Codie even confessed she had secretly named her. Alisha asked her what she had called the little girl, but she refused to say. "I don't want to jinx our chances of adopting her," she'd explained.

The following day Brett and Hudson had taken Alisha to speak privately with the Council. She'd been nervous, but found herself made welcome and the democratic discussion that followed had been refreshingly different to those of the Senate.

Brett had explained about the mutant baby and his visit to the Hive where the scan which Tech had carried out had shown the child to be normal in every way. Between the three of them they explained to the Council about what had occurred in the Hive, and the Senate.

After a lengthy discussion between Council members, they concluded the best way forward was to invite those members of the Hive's Senate who wished to meet with them, to come and discuss a way forward which would mutually benefit both of their societies.

Hudson then requested a date for a claiming ceremony, and shared the news of their pregnancy, omitting the controversial fact that they already knew the baby's sex. One of the female Council members had turned to Alisha and asked her if this was what she wanted, and Alisha had immediately replied with a firm, 'Yes.'

The date had been set for three days hence.

* * *

Alisha was grateful to Rhina for coming to help her dress. The robe she wore had been Rhina's own claiming ceremony dress which although shorter on Alisha, still looked beautiful on her. Claiming robes were simple affairs. Gowns were usually full length and decorated by the wearer and her family. The dress was a shimmering green fabric with small diamond-shaped pieces of shiny copper which circled the sleeves and neck of the dress. Rhina brushed out her hair into gleaming waves and left it loose.

Entering the living area of their home, Brett let out a long whistle.

Hudson crossed the room, took her hand, and raised it to his lips. "You look absolutely beautiful," he said, his voice husky.

Brett joined him. "When does she not?" He kissed her cheek. "Ready?"

She took in their own outfits of black pants which hugged the taut muscles of their thighs, and the open neck, short-sleeved shirts which did nothing to hide the bulging biceps. Clean shaven with slicked down hair, they smelled good too, a mix of their own unique male scent mingled seductively with a note of appealing spice.

She sniffed appreciatively. "*Mm*, what is that?"

The men shared a grin. "It's what our father called his secret weapon," Hudson said. "An aftershave that belonged to his father, too."

“We inherited the little there is left in the bottle. We figured you were worth using the last of it up today,” Brett added.

She opened her arms and embraced them both.

“Any last minute regrets?” Brett asked.

“None. I want to be yours.”

They each leaned in and kissed her cheek.

“Shall we?” Hudson moved to the door and ushered them out before him.

The Council cave was packed with onlookers. The area had been filled with wooden chairs set out with a central aisle between them. Alisha and her two men took their place in the front row on the left. A large wooden table was placed before the audience and the six Council members sat behind it, facing the people.

There were several issues that the Council needed to resolve. A large, bearded man stood. “Codie, Ross, and Evan please step up to the table.”

Alisha saw the family was seated at the front right of the aisle and watched as they did as requested. A nurse appeared, carrying the baby who was crying lustily. Codie stepped forward and cooed softly to the crying child, she scooped her into her arms, cradling her, Ross and Evan crowding protectively around her. They spoke in soothing, deep tones, and the baby’s crying ceased.

The councilor cleared his throat and the room fell silent. “Today is very special. This child born of mutant parents is fully human with no visible defects.”

Everyone clapped and he smiled and waited patiently until the applause died down before speaking.

“Codie, Ross, and Evan, do you wish this child to become your daughter?”

“Yes,” the three chorused in unison.

“Will you always treat her as your own flesh and blood and bring her up with love to become a law-abiding citizen?”

Once again, the family agreed.

“What is your new daughter to be called?”

“Hope,” Codie replied and again the crowd applauded.

“It is my pleasure to announce that from this moment forward, Hope is legally your daughter and a valued member of our society.” This time there were hoots and cries of congratulations as the new family regained their seats. One of the Council members came around front and handed Evan a certificate. The Council member chatted quietly with the proud parents and returned to her seat. People began to applaud and Alisha joined in, happy at the outcome.

“Now, ladies and gentlemen, we have another special moment for you to enjoy—a Claiming Ceremony. Alisha, would you please approach the Council,” a well-built fellow with a bushy beard called.

She rose to her feet and nervously crossed to stand before the Councilors’ table. The bearded man who had spoken to Codie’s family now stood and addressed her. “Alisha, welcome. Are you here of your own free will?”

“I am.”

“Do you wish to be claimed by brothers, Brett and Hudson Trent?”

“I do,” she stated clearly.

“Hudson and Brett, would you please approach the Council.”

Flanked by each of her men on either side, she relaxed.

“Do you want to claim Alisha Coulter?” the bearded man asked.

“We do,” the brothers replied in unison.

“Will you remain faithful to her and protect her and fulfill her needs to the best of your abilities?”

“We will,” they replied firmly.

“Will you make every effort to give her children in order to help populate our decimated planet?”

Hudson smiled. “Most definitely!” Satisfaction rang clear in his voice.

“Certainly will!” Brett declared, the sound of his words echoing in the chamber.

Alisha grinned. She was highly amused by her Husdoms’…*emphatic* replies.

“Will you bring those children up with love, and teach them how to live within our community with respect for their fellow citizens, and for nature, respecting and caring for the world in which live and depend upon?”

The brothers gave a solemn, “Yes, we will.”

“Alisha. Do you promise to do the same? Will you remain faithful to these two men and allow them to mate with you regularly, and willingly conceive, in order to help repopulate the human race?”

Her face flushed hot at such an intimate question, but nevertheless she answered with a firm, “Yes, I will.”

“Gentlemen, do you have anything you wish to add?”

“We do,” Hudson replied.

Brett aligned himself beside his brother, the two of them facing her. Each man reached for one of her hands.

Brett cleared his throat. “Alisha, we have come to know and love you over the past few weeks and we would be honored if you would consent to become our claimed woman and bear our children.” His thumb gently caressed the top of her hand as he spoke.

She was about to reply to him when Hudson spoke. “We promise to love and protect you and our family to the best of our abilities. Will you accept our protection and our discipline when you disobey a request or order which is given for your protection?”

Raising her eyes to him, she answered, “I love and respect you both, and I accept your discipline.” Turning her gaze to Brett she continued. “It would be my loving honor to conceive and bear your children.”

Their faces split into huge grins. She found herself pulled into the center of their embrace as clapping thundered around the chamber. As the applause died away, the officiate called for quiet.

“Alisha, Brett, and Hudson, I declare you to be a legally united family. The only people that may dissolve your unit are this Council—and that will only happen at your request and after all other avenues of reconciliation have been tried. Do you accept these terms?”

“We do,” they said together. Hudson pulled something shiny from his pocket. He dangled a silver link chain in front of Alisha which held a simple open silver triangle of about two inches high and an inch wide. Alisha realized that she’d seen similar necklaces worn by the women of the community. Some wore hexagon-shaped charms, others square. She’d noted Rhina wore a copper triangle threaded on a leather strand around her neck.

“Each point in the triangle represents the three of us,” Hudson explained as he fixed it about her neck. “We’d like you to wear this as a token of our love, and to mark you out to other men as our claimed woman.”

Each man then kissed her in turn and applause broke out as people rose from their seats and surged around them, offering congratulations.

Alisha found herself hugged and kissed by people she’d never met before, let alone spoken to. She found it overwhelming, even as she was grateful for it. Rhina appeared, and after giving her a quick hug, she tugged Alisha aside. “I’ve prepared a surprise feast for the family back at our place, Betty wants to see you. She was so disappointed to miss being at the ceremony, but she can’t wait for you all to get home. Luke and Gregg are trying to extract Brett and Hudson from the crowd. Come along with me. They’ll catch up with us.”

OceanofPDF.com

CHAPTER 20

The celebratory meal had been full of teasing banter and good humor. Alisha felt as though she truly belonged and was a part of the family. Betty had welcomed her with open arms and a warm hug, kissing her grandsons and telling them what a treasure they had in Alisha.

Arriving back at the house, she was aware of the charged atmosphere between herself and her men. Brett locked and barred the door behind them. Hudson took her by the hand and led her up the stairs and into the bedroom where Brett joined them. Silently they moved to either side of her. Reaching for the hem of her robe, they lifted it up and tossed it over her head, throwing it aside.

Her heart thumped at the sudden predatory gleam in their eyes. Rhina had insisted it was customary to be naked beneath the ceremonial dress of a claiming, and now she understood; it enabled the men to move onto the actual claiming part quickly and efficiently. Heat radiated off their large bodies as they circled her, prowling around her nakedness like a couple of dangerous predators. She inhaled their scintillating scent, their obvious arousal making her belly clench with excitement. This was it, the moment they had been training her bottom for. Their dual claiming.

Brett drew close and cupped her chin, pressing his mouth to hers in an all-encompassing kiss.

Hudson stood behind her, his arms slipping around her torso and palming her breasts. Her nipples peaked, responding to his touch, resonating down to her core which dampened with a rush of liquid desire. She moaned against Brett's mouth, his tongue entwining with hers, his hands smoothing over the planes of her torso down to her pulsing cleft.

His fingers gently swept between her folds, then tweaked and teased her nipples. She clutched Hudson's bulging forearms, needing that connection with his flesh.

"Bed," she heard Brett growl and she was lifted from the floor, deposited gently upon the bed. Both men gazed down at her hungrily, Hudson slowly unbuttoning his shirt, his lust-filled gaze raking over her naked form.

When both her Husdoms had stripped their clothes and revealed their powerful frames, Alisha marveled at their astonishingly beautiful bodies. Her eyes were drawn to their massive erections. The sight of the two cocks which pulsed and jerked with a life all of their own made her mouth water. She licked her lips and sat up, her hands reaching for them.

They needed no urging and moved to stand before her. Each of her palms caressed the length of velvety skin covering their rock-hard shafts; her fingers tightened around their girth and pumped slowly.

Brett huffed out his breath, and Hudson groaned with an intensity resembling a growl.

A sense of the power she held over her men heightened her arousal and she squirmed as liquid desire seeped from the lips of her sex. Lowering her head, she licked first one cock and then the other, savoring the essence that leaked from each pulsing member. More masculine growls and groans met with her ministrations. Moving from one to the other she suckled them, taking each one deeper into her mouth, sucking hard.

Suddenly, she was pushed back, and she landed on her back with a suddenness that took her breath away. Hudson, and then Brett clambered onto the bed either side of her.

Tugging her legs apart, Brett eased between her thighs and buried his head in the apex of her thighs. His tongue rasped up her furrow, causing her to

sink limply into the covers with bliss.

“So wet,” he murmured almost to himself.

Hudson leaned over her breasts and took one taut nub into his mouth, causing its twin to ache, pulsating with need. But not for long. She sighed as fingers pinched her other nipple, the pleasure deepening as Brett tasted and teased her clit with his tongue. She felt the familiar tightening and coiling that signaled the onset of an orgasm, and panted, struggling toward her peak.

“No, you don’t,” Brett growled, his breath warm against her wet seam. “You only get to come when we are both inside your body for the first time. When we claim you properly—as our woman.”

“Is she ready for us?” Hudson asked, his voice husky with need.

“Yes,” she moaned, bucking a little against Brett’s weight. “I’m ready! Please take me!”

He chuckled. “Yeah, I think our girl wants us inside her.”

“I do…plea-se,” she begged shamelessly.

Hudson hauled her up with her back to his chest.

Brett fetched something from the bathroom and returned, tossing it to his brother. Hudson pressed a kiss to the back of her neck and tumbled her sideways, turning her until he had her face down over his lap.

Not understanding what was happening, she kicked and struggled. But two sharp smacks to her backside stilled her, and she laid motionless, breathing heavily.

“There’s nothing to get riled up about,” Hudson said. “I’m just gonna play here for a bit, and get you ready for me.” His fingers stroked over her bottom cleft as he palmed her smooth globes, squeezing, and stroking, and probing between her plump cheeks until she arched her hips up to meet his caresses.

He circled her puckered hole, increasing the pressure until his finger pressed inside the tight ring of her ass. He pumped in and out and added

another finger, scissoring them until she relaxed, guiltily enjoying the intimate penetration. Finally, he withdrew. There was a pause, then the sound of a bottle being opened, and cold wetness dripping onto her warm flesh. She recognized what he was doing—it was lubrication.

“She’s ready,” Hudson said gruffly.

Alisha felt his hard shaft jump and press hard against her flank.

“Lift up, sweetheart. I’m gonna lower you onto my cock.”

She knelt up and he helped her to straddle him, ready to be lowered onto his shaft. She felt lightheaded. This was it, the moment they had been waiting for. Would she enjoy it? Was she ready?

She stared up at Brett who faced her. He watched her with glittering eyes, his hand tugging rhythmically at his hardened length. A pearl of shiny precum appeared from the tiny slit at the blunt end of his cock.

Hudson’s hand swept over her mons, his finger pressing and circling her clit. The surge of excitement his action elicited wiped all fear from her brain as white-hot lust flamed within her core. “*Please…”* she begged.

She was lowered to his cock, the head pressing against her opening, the relentless pressure causing her a moment of panic. Hudson was far too big to go inside her bottom!

Brett crawled between their legs and placed his hand between her legs, playing with her clit, immediately reminding her of the pleasure she’d felt when having the butt-plug fitted. It made accepting Hudson’s cock in her stretched bottom hole easier to bear.

“Push back on my cock, Alisha,” Hudson ordered hoarsely. “Let me into your body.”

She tried to do as he asked, but his organ felt so huge. “You’re far too big for me!” she cried.

“Relax, little girl,” Brett told her firmly. “You can and will be claimed there.”

He gave a low chuckle.

“What’s so funny?” she asked crossly.

“Oh baby, you are such a submissive. Your pussy positively gushed when I told you this was happening.”

She flushed hotly, knowing he was right.

In that moment of distraction Hudson surged forward. She gasped at the odd sensation.

“Can you feel how deep I am inside your ass?” he growled from behind.

“I feel so full,” she mewled.

“You’ll be even fuller in a moment,” Brett told her as he laid down beside her.

Hudson rolled them both onto their sides, so that she faced Brett. Hudson moved, withdrawing his cock for an instant, before plunging back into her ass. His arms wrapped around her, his hands covering her breasts, fingers tugging and twisting her nipples.

Brett lifted her leg and placed it over his hip, drawing closer. He kissed her, his tongue mimicking the thrusting, in perfect time with Hudson driving inside in her ass. She was alive with sensation, her sex ached, spasming emptily. “Brett, I need you,” she begged softly as the kiss ended.

“Are you ready to have both your Husdoms claim you, girl?” he demanded.

“Yes,” she agreed, breathless.

Pressed tightly between her men, Hudson stilled as Brett pressed into her wet pussy. The feel of his erection slowly penetrating and stretching her sensitive walls caused Alisha to arc her hips towards him, but Hudson’s cock anchored in her bottom kept her in place. Being unable to move, speared front and back by the two men she loved, was an alluring aphrodisiac, and she felt a wave of pleasure deep within her core. Coiling tightened her lower regions and heat flooded her veins.

“So wonderfully tight,” Brett said with a groan and thrust into her narrow sheath.

She grunted and gave herself over to the sensations they created, one moving in her back passage as the other slid out of her drenched sex. Faster and harder they thrust in rhythm, driving her higher and higher towards rapture. She had never experienced anything so amazing as this. It was the ultimate in belonging, in giving and taking, in loving.

Then Hudson groaned loudly and with a shout, he rammed into her hard from behind.

Brett began to pound into her unwaveringly. At his own yell of completion, Alisha ricocheted into space, annihilating euphoria flooding her body. “Hudson! Brett!” she cried, breathless.

Then she passed out.

* * *

“Fucking hell, we’ve killed her!” Hudson rumbled in surprise.

“No, she has a pulse,” Brett said, grinning. “She’s suffering from extreme sensory overload. Basically, her orgasm was so powerful it wiped her out. I’ll get a cold compress. You go fetch her some drinking water.”

They cleaned themselves up and then did the same for Alisha. Brett gently roused her, wiping her face with a cool, wet cloth. She groaned and began to stir, much to their relief.

“Hey, baby, welcome back. Have a sip of water.” Holding the cup to her lips, Hudson encouraged her to drink.

She sipped slowly.

Brett could see she was still woozy. He pulled the bedding over her and slipped in beside her. Hudson settled in on her opposite side. They cocooned her protectively, offering her their strength.

It wasn’t long before all three of them drifted off to sleep.

* * *

Brett awoke first. He lay in a haze of comfort, relishing the intimacy of being together with his family. He moved his arm and covered Alisha's belly with his open palm, savoring the knowledge that his—and his brother's—child grew there. A wonderful peace settled over him. Alisha stirred beside him and turning his head, he met her extraordinary green gaze.

"Hello, my darling. How do you feel?" he murmured.

She smiled, stretching languorously. "I feel wonderful."

He traced the contour of her cheek with his finger. "Good. You gave us quite a scare."

She frowned, "I did? How?"

"You passed out from orgasm overload."

"Wow! Well, that was your fault. It was amazing. Um…"

"Yes?" he encouraged, smiling.

"I…"

"Go on, sweetheart," Hudson's voice encouraged from behind. He rose up on one elbow, looking down at her.

She glanced from one to the other. "I have to tell you…I don't think I could stand it if you ever decided you didn't want me anymore," she said, her voice barely above a whisper.

"What? Where is this coming from?" Brett asked astounded.

"There's no chance in hell of us not wanting you. Don't you know we love you?" Hudson said.

"You do? Even though my hair is too long and I'm, well, kinda scruffy now?"

Brett was astonished. How could she not know how they felt about her? "I'm sorry if we haven't made it clear before, but Alisha, honey, you are the love of our lives!"

“I am?”

“What d’you mean by scruffy?” Hudson asked with a frown.

“I don’t look like a woman who belongs in the Hive anymore,” she explained.

“Well, good, because you don’t belong there. You belong right here!”

“I agree, Hudds. What do we have to do to convince you that you are ours now and forever?” Brett asked.

The brothers leaned in, vying to claim her lips. Thankfully, he won the jostle, pouring his love for her into the kiss, showing her just how strongly he felt about her.

“Alisha, whatever happens we’re united now, forever,” Hudson told her. “And don’t you ever forget that.”

Brett raised his head and scanned her beautiful face tenderly. “You’re ours, kitten. Signed, sealed, and claimed. I love you Alisha—and I’m sure as hell never letting you go.”

“Never doubt our devotion. We’re a family now. Soon, we’ll have our first child of many, an’ then you won’t have time to worry about all this nonsense about us not loving you. We’ll be proving how much we love you every single day for the rest of our lives,” Hudson added firmly.

“I love you both,” she said, her voice cracking with emotion. “So, so much.”

Brett watched as Hudson’s mouth lowered to hers, satisfied that by the end of the night there would be no doubt left in Alisha’s mind over how they both felt about her.

They would prove to her that she was theirs—and they were hers—and that this was far from the end of their story.

Their life together was only just beginning.

The End

OceanofPDF.com

AFTERWORD

Stormy Night Publications would like to thank you for your interest in our books.

If you liked this book (or even if you didn't), we would really appreciate you leaving a review on the site where you purchased it. Reviews provide useful feedback for us and our authors, and this feedback (both positive comments and constructive criticism) allows us to work even harder to make sure we provide the content our customers want to read.

If you would like to check out more books from Stormy Night Publications, if you want to learn more about our company, or if you would like to join our mailing list, please visit our website at:

http://www.stormynightpublications.com

OceanofPDF.com

MORE STORMY NIGHT BOOKS BY VANESSA BROOKS

Claimed by Daddy

After experiencing some violent turbulence during a flight, Penny West suddenly finds herself in a strange new reality, one in which she has a husband… and he expects her to call him daddy.

When his wife claims not to know him and a swat to her backside doesn't put a stop to what he assumes is bratting, David Forrester realizes something out of the ordinary is happening. But as different as she may be from the woman he remembers, one thing hasn't changed about this new Penny. She still needs her bare bottom spanked by a firm but loving daddy, especially when she's naughty.

Seeing no way to return to the world as she remembers it, Penny decides there are worse things than having a distractingly handsome husband who knows how to make her scream his name in bed. But when David starts to take her in hand more thoroughly, will she resist being claimed by daddy?

Buy on Amazon

Needing Daddy

Upon exiting the aircraft after a flight buffeted by frightening turbulence, Penny Forrester emerges into an alternate reality where she has swapped dimensions. She now finds herself a single woman rather than the wife of the firm-handed husband she calls daddy. Undaunted, she sets out to track down the man she loves.

When a woman he doesn't know seeks him out and claims to be the sister of an old friend, David Forrester cannot help being drawn to her. Penny's obvious need for a firm but loving daddy only increases his desire for her, and before long she is learning to be his good little girl both over his knee and in his bed. But when she tells him her story will he believe her?

Buy on Amazon

OceanofPDF.com

VANESSA BROOKS LINKS

You can keep up with Vanessa Brooks via her website, her Twitter account, her Facebook page, her BookBub profile, and her Goodreads profile, using the following links:

https://vanessanovels.weebly.com/

https://twitter.com/vanessabrooksUK

https://www.facebook.com/vanessanovels

https://www.bookbub.com/authors/vanessa-brooks

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/450003.Vanessa_Brooks

OceanofPDF.com